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# COMMONWEAL

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## BLAMING THE VILLAINS, NOT THE VICTIMS

**John Paul II takes on the Super Powers**

ROBERT E. WHITE

## IN MEMORIAM

**Ambassador William Shannon**
**JAMES FINN**

**Cardinal John Dearden**
**J. BRYAN HEHIR**

## ISRAEL GOES TO THE POLLS

**The Future of a Divided Nation**

MITCHELL COHEN

**Books:**

**JOHN ELIAS on Catholic Faith for Adults ■ KENNETH P. JAMESON on The Japanese Challenge ■ MICHAEL J. HIMES on Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger ■ LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM on The New Cosmology**

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# CORRESPONDENCE

## The task at hand

Phoenix, Ariz.

*To the Editors:* The editorial ["Anniversary Waltz," July 15[ hit the mark. The lack of credibility in official church teaching caused by *Humanae vitae* hurt its life-defending position on abortion. The task now is to better articulate the promotion of human life in medical ethics.

WILLIAM V. DOLAN, M.D.

## Transforming the Holocaust

New York, N.Y.

*To the Editors:* I am truly shocked by Gordon Zahn's article ["The Pope in Austria," August 12]. Familiar with Zahn's work on Franz Jaegerstaetter, I anticipated a fair and balanced analysis of a papal journey which made many of us in the Jewish community sad and perplexed. Instead, I found assertions that made me even sadder and more perplexed. The cause of Catholic-Jewish relations has been battered by John Paul's omission at Mauthausen. Gordon Zahn's confused and contradictory whitewash/critique of that performance further batters the cause.

Zahn's comparison of Waldheim with American or Israeli officials is alarming. Does he really mean to suggest that this international diplomatic pariah, condemned both at home and abroad for his complicity in the Holocaust and his years of cowardly dissimulation, has more moral credibility than officers of our government or Israel's ! Has the pendulum of "moral sensitivity" swung so far against Israel and the U.S.? The equation of Waldheim's wartime activities as a loyal servant of the Third Reich with those undertaken by representatives of democratic Israel or democratic America is shameful. It is an abandonment of both political and moral sanity to make such an equation. That Zahn has done so shows the extent to which the meaning of the Holocaust has been lost. The essential fact of that tragedy—that it was a genocide of the Jews—has been marginalized.

Must the Jews on only the fiftieth anniversary of *Kristalnacht* argue that they were the primary victims of Hitler's evil? It seems so, for Zahn tells us that he would argue against "the tendency of some to grant the international Jewish community something approaching 'monopoly rights' to the Holocaust, ignoring the near universality of the human beings who perished in its horror."

Who ignores what here? As Elie Wiesel reminds us, not all the victims were Jews, but all the Jews were victims. Anti-Semitism was the engine that drove Nazism. "Holocaust" refers to the outcome of that anti-Semitism: the genocide of six million Jewish men, women, and children, and the eradication of European Jewish civilization. Others were murdered, others were martyred, but the "Holocaust" remains a uniquely Jewish tragedy. When the term is broadened it is attenuated, flattened, and corrupted. The universalization of the tragedy suggested by Gordon Zahn, as well as its "Catholicization" practiced by John Paul, distort the past. Let others find their own words and names for their tragedies, but let them not transform the Holocaust. To redefine it in universal terms or to integrate it into a historiography of Christian martyrdom, into a time of trial and triumph for the church, wounds Jews deeply.

Why this concern? The loss of Jewish specificity—a real danger, given trends in Europe and at the Vatican—will domesticate the Holocaust in the memory of future generations. It will remove its scandal and sting. If the Holocaust becomes a "normal" wartime event—and the Waldheims of this world hope as much—the possibilities of its recurrence are increased. The attempted murder of every Jew might be attempted again. It's possible. To dull the edge of Holocaust memory is to smooth the way toward anti-Semitic insanity.

Thus Jews are concerned about what the shape of memory will be in Europe and America a hundred years from now. And Jews feel obligated to keep the primary memories—the memories of the survivors—alive. God forbid that the selective and distorting memory of Gordon Zahn prevails.

RABBI DR. ALLAN MITTLEMAN

## The author replies:

While I respect and regret Rabbi Mittleman's objection to my article, I think my position is valid. The universality of which I speak relates to any act or program which dehumanizes both victim and perpetrator, reducing the one to an anonymous cipher in a category—religious, racial, national, tribal, ideological or whatever—and the other to a mere instrument of destruction. The preeminence claimed for Hitler's "Final Solution" may be justified on grounds of sheer number (though there have been

*(Continued on page 574)*

*Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters should not exceed 250 words and are subject to editing for clarity and space limitations.*

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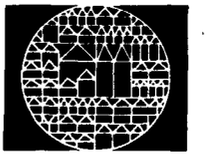

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# Cory's democracy

As Corazon Aquino completes her third year as president of the Philippines, she has launched what Manila columnist Amando Doronila calls, "the era of the Great Plod"(*Manila Chronicle*, July 27). His description is not all that biting since it tacitly assumes that the Aquino government, which has survived five coup attempts in less than three years, is advancing—haltingly. Nonetheless, the columnist's taunting words voice the heightened expectations of Filipinos, now that relative stability has been achieved. The essential point, of course, is that the Aquino government, by moving too slowly in the promotion of social change, or being perceived that way, could gradually undermine itself and lose its critical base of support.

As the political situation now stands, few Filipinos are anxious for a new leader. Almost no one contests the president's personal integrity or her intentions to shape an equitable civil society. Most give her credit for two major accomplishments. First, democratic institutions have been reestablished through the drafting of a new constitution and the subsequent formation of a duly elected Congress. Second, the beginnings of a dynamic economic recovery are in sight—the GNP is growing at the enviable rate of 7.6 percent. In the industrial sector, unemployment is down and wages are up. A body of progressive financial and social legislation has been passed: tax reform, reduced rates for home loans, an option to cut medical costs through the sale of generic drugs, a land redistribution policy, and free secondary education that has increased high school enrollment by over one-third. And more is to come.

According to the proposals in Aquino's State of the Nation address, July 25, plans are underway to build up over the next few years the basic infrastructure—roads, water systems, and telephones—of rural areas.

These accomplishments contribute to the country's current, overall stability, even though they cater to the middle class more than the very poor. Yet these same improvements have also fueled expectations among a people just beginning to find that, compared to dictatorships, democracies are often balky and slow-moving—a pace ill-suited to a nation burdened by desperate poverty, rapid population growth, overwhelming debt, and thousands of armed insurgents. Those most in need are eager for miracles.

As if rising expectations were not enough, the Aquino government is now facing three other problems. A wave of assassinations has terrorized the country. Amnesty International and the New York-based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights have reported government human rights abuses. Internal corruption has marred the Aquino administration itself.

It is ironic that in the wake of a nearly bloodless revolution in 1986, violence, rights abuses, and government corruption—eerily reminiscent to some of the



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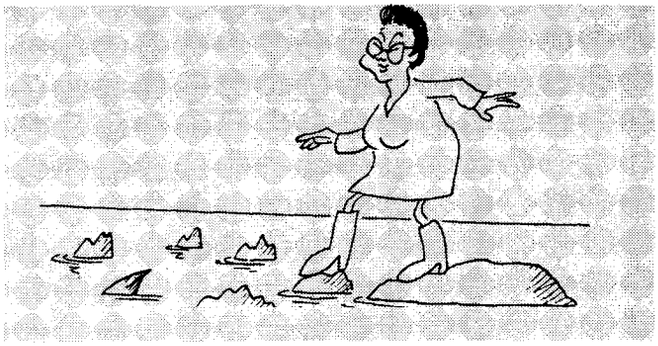

Marcos dictatorship—are now chipping away at the Aquino democracy. Ironic but true. Although Aquino's personal reputation remains impeccable and although the violence today is not state-sponsored, voters question whether the president can control the abuses of those around her. And if she can, why hasn't she acted quickly and decisively? Columnist Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J., remarks that "the Cory Government, marked by 'moderation,' is now perceived as betraying, in little and big ways, the spirit of 1986" (*Manila Chronicle*, August 30).

The recent wave of violence is directly linked to human rights abuses. First, there is the so-called vigilante problem—the abuses by local groups of civilians who are assisting the army in its war against the insurgents. According to the government, these civilians are supposed to be unarmed volunteers. There is evidence, however, that some bands are armed and that to increase their ranks they forcibly recruit others. Worse, some have committed particularly brutal acts against their countrymen—for example, the beheading of a sugar worker suspected of collaborating with the rebels. Not one vigilante has yet been prosecuted.

In mid-July, ten days before Aquino's State of the Nation speech, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines issued a statement in response to this wave of violence. They spoke to all Filipinos, but called on the government specifically to dismantle and disarm vigilante groups, to enforce discipline in the ranks of the military, and to work for a ceasefire with the insurgents by resuming the peace talks that broke off in January, 1987.

As if in response, President Aquino tried, in her address, to distinguish between volunteer forces and vigilantes: "The armed forces must be supplemented by Unarmed Civilian Volunteer Organizations," she said, while announcing that she had instructed the chief of staff "...to begin the process of disbanding all so-called vigilante groups."

What is more, the assassinations of leftists, some of whom were human rights advocates, have raised questions about the possibility of government collusion in the deeds themselves. Surely it is a failure of the government to protect these particularly vulnerable citizens. In general, the government has shown widespread ineptitude in maintaining law and order. A noted labor leader; the secretary-general of the Bayan party; the former public works secretary; and a former rebel leader, all have been gunned down. But the government has been slow to investigate and prosecute the killers.

Government corruption—a traditional problem within a society where family favors are expected from those in power—now involves some of Aquino's own relatives. It is also possible, as Amando Doronila has pointed out, that the issue may be more far-reaching than simple corruption. The moral do-gooders currently waging a public crusade against government graft may unwittingly be playing into the hands of Aquino's opponents—whose own interests would be served by destabilizing the fragile democracy. The only way for Aquino to keep that from happening is to clean up the administration herself.

There are two ways to view the current situation. The government's achievements in economic growth and its gains in redistributing the nation's wealth appear especially significant when seen against the backdrop of violence and the high odds the Aquino government has faced from the beginning.

On the other hand, there is a weak spot within the Aquino government, and it is not merely the president's cautious political style. It is the uneasy alliance she made with the military at the outset of her political term and has since maintained. The army acted as an instrument of peace in the overthrow of Marcos. Under the leadership of Gen. Fidel Ramos, it protected Aquino's government during the bloody Honasan-coup attempt. But now Ramos seems convinced that his troops are winning the war against the rebels and should not stop short of victory. Hence, his reluctance to negotiate a

## The ambassador goes home

When William V. Shannon was buried from St. Aidan's Church in Brookline, Massachusetts on September 30, the many strands of his professonal and personal life were brought together. First, the celebrant informed us that St. Aidan was a seventh-century Irish missionary and it was in this same church that John F. Kennedy had been baptized. During the funerary tributes paid to Bill Shannon, Senator Edward Kennedy revealed that a principal reason that President John Kennedy had received the warm reception he did when he visited Ireland was that many of the words he delivered had been composed by William Shannon. Bill himself was later to receive high praise and much affection from the Irish when, under the Carter administration, he served as a very engaged and imaginative U.S. ambassador to Ireland.

Other tributes came from colleagues who knew Bill as a journalist, historian, columnist, editorial writer, and teacher. John Oakes not only spoke of his deep admiration for Bill's professional integrity as editorial writer for the *New York Times* but of his own long friendship. Noting Bill's fastidiousness in dress and decorum, he remembered waiting nervously to drive Bill to the hospital where



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ceasefire with the rebels. Of course, the rebels are also claiming gains.

In this situation Aquino must exert her leadership. It is not enough to announce, as she has done, her openness to negotiations, but then to require from the rebels a formal request for talks. She needs to initiate the peace effort as she did in 1986, to enlist the military in another round of negotiations with the rebels, to insist on the disbanding of the armed vigilantes and the disciplining of overeager and violence-prone army recruits and volunteers. Were she to do this, she would more than reassure her critics and her constituents. She would also strengthen the links between political stability and economic recovery—at home and in the eyes of foreign investors and creditors. With that, she could create a climate for the deeper social reform, national rebuilding, and sturdier democracy that the people of the Philippines have struggled so mightily to achieve.

## THE BEGGAR & THE MAYOR

Recently, on a crowded New York subway, a man first startled, then humored passangers by calling on them to perform an act of civil disobedience. By decree of Mayor Edward I. Koch, the man announced, anyone contributing to his outstretched paper cup would face arrest. To the relief of his audience, the man went on to say that, fortunately, this was not yet the case. The mayor—who himself will be on the trains in a short time soliciting votes—had not as yet implemented a promised ordinance against begging. But the man's audience well might have thought the mayor had, following his well-publicized diatribe this past summer against beggars and aggressive panhandling.

This particular subway solicitor, it turned out, was a master at working an audience: as the train glided into the station and the tension he had initially induced began to subside, his cup was filled by approving riders.

The mayor, of course—like all of us—has eyes to see, and he does not see what he likes. We can't blame him. Poverty in America is no longer hidden as it once was. Public begging is now an unabashed and unavoidable fact all across the land. Magnet locations like bus and train terminals have become gathering places for the homeless, the unemployed, the deranged; they are our Calcuttas, the *favelas* of the North. And, what is worse, they are proliferating.

No wonder the mayor is angry. He is embarrassed, he is frustrated. What he sees is not only individuals degraded to the level of begging, but a terrible public-policy failure. The

his wife, Elizabeth, was preparing to give birth to one of the children. Bill was lingering in front of his closet. "One must be careful what tie to wear when one is going to have a baby," Bill explained. John Oakes then read the loving tribute that Elizabeth Shannon and Liam, Christopher, and David paid to Bill as husband and father.

No one could capture in brief comments anyone as brilliant and accomplished as Bill Shannon. But there did emerge from testimonials delivered at Bill's funeral Mass a sense of his integrity, compassion, wit, elegance, loyalty, and appropriate political detachment. These qualities were evident in his prose as they were in his person.

My own memories of Bill are closely entwined with *Commonweal* where, Bill said, he made among the editors three very close friends, John Cogley, William Clancy, and myself. I remember Bill coming into the office to write a column and in short order turning out a highly polished, thoughtful piece. An unusual but not a unique achievement. Bill's piece, however, was studded with dates and statistics that most writers would have retrieved only from reference books, but which Bill easily found in his remarkably capacious memory. I learned early on not to dispute him on historical facts; had he questioned it, I think I would have come to doubt even my own birth date.

Bill's deep political interest and insight, his vast memory, and his elegant prose made every book, every article he wrote a pleasure to read and a formidable challenge to those who held contesting views. What made his writing of more than the day's or month's passing interest was that it was grounded in a deep moral sense. Recalling Lord Acton in a piece he wrote for *Commonweal* over thirty years ago (April 16, 1954), he referred to "academicians who in their eagerness to be fair and to present history in all its many-sided complexity evade altogether the historian's ultimate responsibility for making moral judgment on men and events."

Bill did not evade that responsibility. For example, long before final proof rolled in and before it was popular to say so, Bill declared that "Spiro T. Agnew is not qualified for the high office he seeks." Even when Bill's moral judgments were not explicit, they permeated his political analysis and historical commentary.

Those who knew him primarily through his writing will miss a kind of moral/political analysis that is always rare and today much needed. For those whose lives were closely bound with Bill's, his death leaves a gap that must be permanent. And for those who could join in the message of the funeral Mass celebrating the passage of Bill Shannon to another life, we can truly say: our prayers go with you.

JAMES FINN

*James Finn is a former editor of* Commonweal *and is currently the editor of* Freedom at Issue, *a publication of Freedom House.*



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increasing numbers should short-circuit the easy judgment we make of individuals, and alert us to the real failures of government and public policy. There is, after all, a clear relation between the multitude of homeless persons and a federal housing budget cut from $33 billion to $14 billion in the last eight years; between formerly self-reliant individuals and a minimum wage that now falls, on an annual basis, $1,900 short of the official poverty level; between the raving lost ones who roam the streets of our cities and the lack of structured, government-sponsored programs for the mentally impaired or deranged; between the national addiction to drugs and the dearth of treatment centers.

No wonder the mayor is angry. We all ought to be. But not simply at the individuals who make us uncomfortable by their smell, their importuning, their aggressive and unpredictable behavior. That only dissipates our fury into a ready but infinitely passive void. Our anger should be turned instead into creating what years ago in *The Other America* Michael Harrington called "A public commitment to create a new environment for human beings."

There is, after all, a mysterious—in the sense that it inspires wonder, when we come to think about it—bond connecting us all. Rich or poor, we are, at the heart of it, bone of the same Adam's rib. We share a common subway ride across this orb in time. Our destination is ultimately the same, and as Charles Péguy said, when we get to heaven, God will ask, "Where are the others?"

In Hebrew, the words for charity (*zedakah*) and justice (*zedek*) are closely related. When an act of charity is performed toward one, it lifts not only that person, but the spirit of the whole society. Such help is therefore never simply a matter of private virtue, it expresses the character of a whole people.

Martin Buber called charity an artery of existence. That artery, to perform its task, must be both supple and strong. It must provide direction for what would otherwise be dissipated and lost. It demands a proper discernment. That is why the psalmist (Psalm 71) prayed long ago that the King's son might not only judge the people in equity but the poor in right judgment. How are we, as individuals and as a people, to judge their needs and to respond to them?

First of all, we must approach each individual in light of her or his human dignity. Our response must always be one of basic respect, despite the fear or resentment we may initially feel in our hearts. Second, we must know our limitations. What we give as individuals must be balanced by the responsibilities of our state in life. And as a society, we must order our priorities to the common good of all. Specific programs meant to assist those in need must maintain the self-respect of those helped and insure their dignity. Third, the highest form of charity is that which enables a poor person to become self-sustaining, that eventually enables the person who is helped to become capable of responding to others in return. Finally, we must honestly realize that what we give, both as individuals and as a society, is but a token—not only of what we have received already ourselves, but of what will actually satisfy another's need. That need will be most nearly met by a just and welcoming society, one that begins here and now with each one of us. It will begin here alone, at least as long as the trains keep running. Perhaps, in fact, that is why anything keeps running at all: to give us the opportunity to respond to one another; to give us the chance to actually become generous human beings.

## ET CETERA

**THAT'S THE SPIRIT** From a press release: "The decision to hold a conference is the result of a meeting in Atlanta of lay people and clergy with deep abiding faith in and love for the age old traditions of the Episcopal church. They decided it is time to stop being negative—to take *positive* action—to stand up and be counted.

"Join with us in an important conference to tell those who would change our church "NO!"

And from the PEN Newsletter (September, 1988): [Cynthia Ozick in a statement objecting to PEN's criticism of Israeli censorship of Arab writers] "Allen Ginsberg was not really concerned with censorship but wanted to bash Israel and crush dissent in PEN—although he shouldn't take this personally because she knew him to be the sweetest and kindest of men."

**UNNATURAL ACTS** In the wake of the Whitehead-Stern surrogate motherhood struggle, state legislatures are taking an increasingly critical and restrictive look at the practice. In the Whitehead-Stern case the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that monetary payment for the services of Marybeth Whitehead violated the state's adoption laws and declared the contract invalid. Michigan, which houses the largest clinic providing surrogacy services, passed a law at the end of June forbidding commercial surrogacy. A Michigan court upheld its constitutionality when the attorney general agreed that such contracts could be valid if the mother was not required to give up the baby.

Several other states have passed or are considering legislation that would make surrogate contracts unenforceable. This past May, the New York State Task Force on Life and the Law recommended to the legislature a ban on payments for surrogacy; where surrogacy was undertaken gratuitously, the task force proposed that custody be granted the birth mother if she changed her mind (*Surrogate Parenting: Analysis and Recommendations for Public Policy*). Proponents of surrogacy argue that banning payment and strengthening the birth mother's rights will not end the practice. Perhaps they are right. But as Elizabeth Kane, a surrogate mother herself, argues in a recent book, there are costs and pains that she never imagined when she agreed to bear a child for an infertile couple—a decision she now deeply regrets (*Birth Mother: The Story of America's First Legal Surrogate Mother*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). If not the law, then the experience itself may limit the practice.



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# WHAT CAME IN LIKE A LION
## WENT OUT LIKE A WIMP

What is now trumpeted by its sponsors as the most significant revision of welfare in fifty-three years, has been described by advocates for low-income families as "pretty disgusting," and by a welfare supervisor at the Texas Department of Human Resources as "WIMP"—for Welfare Improvement (Maybe) Plan.

In 1987 the House of Representatives passed a version of welfare reform. It included improvements in health- and child-care benefits, in program administration, and in incentives to states to raise welfare grants. Those were modest though helpful changes, but for poor kids and their families, it was pretty much downhill from then on.

The bill that emerged from the Senate this June was opposed by virtually every church, labor, low-income, and social-advocacy group interested in the issue. Governors and state welfare directors supported it chiefly for two reasons that are hardly new: it represents money to states for education and job training, and offers some additional tools for enforcing child support obligations, for example, wage withholding.

The conference committee that met over the summer to work out a compromise and accommodate the White House, lurched from stalemate to stalemate, then, with impetus from the first presidential debate, produced a bill.

At the end, the compromise contained no national welfare benefit "floor," no help to poor states with pitifully low benefits (less than $60 a month per person in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama), only six months' aid for children in two-parent families in the twenty-three states still requiring fathers to leave home. Women who want to supplement welfare with work would still find their benefits reduced—along with any incentive to find part-time jobs. The only benefit improvement over current law would come when a woman leaves welfare to take a low-paying job—at that point she'll be entitled to "transitional" health- and child-care benefits for one year.

Supporters point to the new education and training provisions for the "severely disadvantaged"; opponents note that even when fully-funded those features will provide only $1,200 per participant—compared, for example, with costs under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) which has average training costs of $3,100 for people who are regarded as "job ready." Supporters talk about the health- and child-care benefits; opponents note that those benefits "sunset" in 1995 (though the work provisions do not), and in no year is it clear where the child-care services for roughly 1.6 million children will come from.

"It's going to put people through a ringer; put so many new requirements on people who already are put through a lot, to get such small benefits, and with no assurance of real education or training," says Susan Reese of the Coalition on Block Grants and Human Needs.

The biggest sticking point (and greatest misunderstanding) throughout the debate centered on the issue of mandatory work and training requirements. The most serious disagreements came over the requirement that unemployed fathers who are between jobs perform sixteen hours a week of undefined "community service." The Republican governors of New Jersey and Oklahoma were among those objecting. Those fathers not only don't need unpaid work "experience" (having just come from paid work), but participating in it takes time that would be better put to finding paid work. Furthermore, setting up the programs is a waste of scarce resources, since states will also be required to operate at least two additional job-related "activities," spreading limited funds even more thinly. With such limited funds it's assumed states will choose those that are cheapest—and least able to move poor families out of poverty. But those were points the White House insisted on, and won.

The opposition to mandatory work requirements stems not from a desire to avoid work (jobs at good wages have always been a priority of welfare advocates), but from experience. States offering job experience and training on a voluntary basis have always had more people signing up than jobs to offer, and every state has long waiting lists for subsidized child care—a necessity for poor families seeking work. If jobs, training, and child care were plentiful, mandatory requirements might be viewed differently; under the circumstances, requiring participation becomes a costly form of harassment. Mothers will not even be allowed to decide whether the available child care is adequate. States might decide, for example, that an eight-year-old can provide adequate after-school care, even if the child's mother disagrees.

By the end some of the worst provisions in the original Senate bill had been dropped by House-Senate conferees, but so had most of the improvements in the original House bill. Families currently on welfare won't be helped out of poverty by what remains; and most poor people not already eligible for welfare will get nothing. Even Republicans within the Department of Health and Human Services were puzzled as to why anyone, including their colleagues at the White House or liberals on Capitol Hill, would want to spend over $3 billion for the bill that finally emerged.

Throughout, serious differences divided the players. To the White House, welfare reform meant spending less (or very little more), helping fewer people, and requiring adults to work at unpaid jobs. To recipients and their advocates it meant making the system more rational, the benefits more realistic, and helping poor families out of poverty, not just off welfare. To some in the Congress, it meant a way to get money to their states to help meet welfare costs.

Early in the process New York Senator Daniel Moynihan, chief sponsor of the Senate bill, made it clear that he would agree to anything if it would produce a bill with his name on it.



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The compromises came early and deep, creating many of the later difficulties. As he has in the past, Moynihan blamed welfare advocates, whom he characterized as "letting the good be the enemy of the best" (and then took comments out of context from their letters of opposition to claim their support for his bill).

Ultimately, presidential politics may have had more to do with the outcome than any of the bill's particulars. Following the first debate, neither side wanted to be responsible for having sandbagged what Moynihan had skillfully hyped as the welfare reform of the century. Both sides quickly cut their losses and agreed on a final bill. Unfortunately, this time more than most, the hype exceeds what the bill can deliver.

Two years after President Reagan called for a new look at welfare policy, we're reminded that it isn't easy to help needy children while punishing their parents. NANCY AMIDEI

*Nancy Amidei has written frequently on poverty, hunger, and human services issues in these pages.*

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**OF SEVERAL MINDS** John Garvey

# CREEPING DIMNESS

## WHEN THE PAST IS MARGINALIZED

I have been thinking about moving to another city, which means looking around our house and seeing how much there is to move or give away. The thing I seem to have most of is books. This comes about almost genetically. I grew up in a house full of books, all kinds of books, and part of the reason was that my father was a publisher. The more important reason the books were there (and no doubt the reason my father became a publisher) was that he was a reader. So was my mother. So were people on both sides of the family.

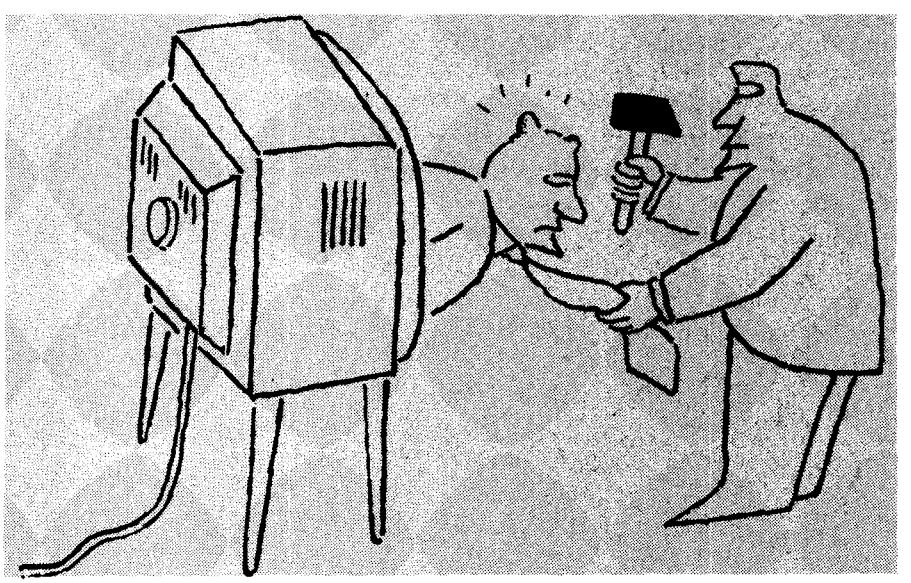
My brothers and sisters and I wound up being people whose reading was nearly compulsive: we'd read cereal boxes if a newspaper wasn't handy at the breakfast table. Growing up in that environment made me a lover, or anyway a devourer, of books and magazines. It had another effect, something which only became clear to me in the context of recent complaints about the closing of the American mind, cultural illiteracy, and creeping dimness.

One thing about books: they are objects, like lamps, ashtrays, vases. They last, they hang around. Even tattered paperbacks, with brittle yellow pages turning to brown, pages that flake away as you read them, tend to be kept forever. Throwing away a hardcover book, no matter how awful it is, strikes me as vaguely sinful. This may be close to superstition, but it is a feeling I am sure I share with many readers.

This leads to keeping books for decades, something my parents did. So when I was in grade school and a long illness forced me to read seriously, since there wasn't much else to do, some of the books available to me were written by authors popular before and during World War II. I read books, plays, and poems by people like Norman Corwin, Clifford Odets, and Louis MacNeice. I looked at Bill Mauldin's wartime "Willie and Joe cartoons." Once, visiting my mother's father, I found an old paperback edition of Raymond Chandler's *The Lady in the Lake* in a small sunny room with a wall full of books. That night, in a paneled room upstairs, next to an old cathedral radio, I stayed up late and read, and felt that my life would be changed forever by the voice of Philip Marlowe.

The result of all this is that during the late fifties and early sixties I had some sense, however dated and filtered, of what my parents' generation had gone through, what they found interesting, what they cared most about. When I saw movies from the forties they seemed dated, of course, but at the same time there was something alive there for me, because of the books I'd read at home; there was a sense of recognition and connection.

I have been in some homes where there are no books at all, homes where the television set dominates the living room; or if there are books they are very recent, and likely to be of the inspirational or





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self-help variety. This is mildly depressing, where the taste of the people in such homes is concerned, but it is culturally disastrous when you consider what it says about the continuity of a culture.

I realize that one particular sin many families commit is to perpetuate the notion that the way *they* did things was superior to the way all those other people do things. This is a trap worth avoiding, and the choice of books as a focus here—important as they are to me, and have been to my family—is not so much the point as the fact that books were a way of connecting one generation to another, or passing on a history which, because of the way it was passed on, is shared. That can be done with old photos, a lot of story telling, or the presence in the house of an older relative who is an active part of the family's life.

What is worrisome is the absolute dominance of the present in so many homes, and the absence of any shared past. It isn't a class phenomenon so much as it is the result of a society which moves around a lot and thus disposes of objects which other, more stable societies would retain; this, combined with a relentless and largely media-driven compulsion to worry most about the *new*, whatever it may be, makes a concern with the novels and essays, or for that matter the spoken memories, of an older generation marginal. In too many cases, it isn't even marginal.

In a *Mother Jones* column some months ago, Roger Wilkins argued that the reason for the rise in racism among young people, a rise demonstrated by racist incidents on several college campuses, was a profound ignorance of history. A lot of young people are simply unaware that black Americans had to struggle, sometimes to the death, for civil rights. The hawkishness of some young people is, similarly, grounded in an ignorance of what happened during the time of the war in Vietnam. Our schools are largely responsible for this; but so are our homes.

The ignorance perpetuated by teachers and school systems is a reflection of the ignorance of society in general. In an interview with the *New York Times*, novelist J.F. Powers recently offered the opinion that people are more stupid than they used to be, and as misanthropic as that may sound, there seems to be evidence for what he says. One compelling bit of evidence is the nature of the current presidential campaign, a proof, if one were needed, that you can't underestimate the intelligence of the American people. The lack of real substance in this year's campaign makes the Reagan-Mondale race look like Madison versus Hamilton. There have been some complaints about this, but the media go on reporting what the polls say about who is ahead, with few serious explorations of either candidate's fitness for office; man-in-the-street interviewees respond with depressing thickness to stupid questions. In any case, this race brings to mind Mort Sahl's observation that the history of the American presidency is a disproof of the theory of evolution. (I think the real reason for all of this is that television acts on the brain roughly the way marijuana does: it focuses your attention to the moment, and prolonged use leads to short-term, and eventually long-term, memory loss. George Bush's curiously revisionist view of Pearl Harbor could be the result of too much TV.)

I've come to the depressing conclusion that, given the choice, most people will choose numbness and distraction over all other possibilities. In the old days the absence of car radios, combined with the time it took to get from one place to another, forced a kind of solitude and silence on people. It was probably good for them whether they liked it or not. In a similar way, the absence of TV, VCR's, and the rest forced people to read, talk with one another, and remember. I am not at all sure that it was a happier way of living, but it did do something to connect one generation with another, and it gave us a wider world. □

## WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

# GOING FORWARD

## THE LEADERSHIP OF CARDINAL DEARDEN

On October 15, Cardinal John Dearden would have celebrated his eighty-first birthday. Instead, last August 5 the church of Detroit celebrated his passage to eternal glory. The local church of Detroit was joined on that day by the prayers of the church in the United States, for Dearden's ministry could not be fully understood or appreciated only in terms of his archdiocese. The church of his country and the universal church were equally the beneficiaries of his gifts of faith, intelligence, and courage.

It is risky to try to capture the meaning of a man's life in a word, but in John Dearden's case one word provides the pivotal idea of his life. He was, in the best sense of the term, a churchman, an ecclesial man. To put an individual's life in perspective, it is useful to consult historians. David O'Brien of Holy Cross expressed his conviction at the time of Dearden's death that future historians will rank him "as the most important American bishop since James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore."

To watch Dearden from a distance or close-up was to see the example of an ecclesial man. His sense of the church was so rich and his love for the church so deep that it could sustain those he served, those he worked with, and those who worked



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for him. He was called by vocation to lead—as a bishop in the local church, as a cardinal in the universal church, and as president of the national episcopal conference. The bulk of this time of leadership was fulfilled during the age of Vatican II. The demands of the conciliar era specified the challenge of leadership for him; the substance of the conciliar teaching shaped the meaning of leadership for him; and the spirit of the council informed how he led.

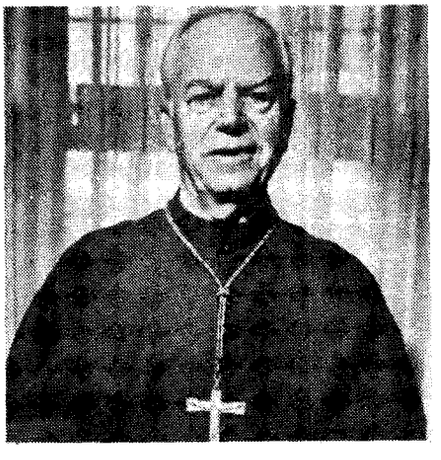
In 1970, when the complexity of embodying the life of the council in the church was intensified by the convulsions of social change in American society, Msgr. John Tracy Ellis wrote a sober essay about the demands of leadership in *The Critic*. Ellis quoted from Max Lerner's description of creative leadership: "It means the ability to penetrate the heart of any situation and assess it. It means making decisions while keeping the options open as far as possible, so that the number of choices does not diminish too quickly. It means developing a climate...that is conducive to change. And it means maintaining a dialogue between those who make the decisions and those at a lower level who help in making the decisions or who carry them out."

Cardinal Dearden, in my view, met this demanding test on every count. Intellectually, he was both broad and deep, joining theological knowledge with a cultivated sense of historical judgment. When a problem facing the church needed to be "penetrated and assessed," one could count on both wisdom and courage from the archbishop of Detroit. The record—from internal reform of the church to school desegregation and busing—shows both the courage to decide and the self-confidence to hear a spectrum of opinion before and after the decision. His personal conception of ministry, expressed in his talks to the clergy of Detroit, reveals a man of deep faith, schooled in the ways of prayer.

The one great task he left unfinished was his autobiography. Despite urging from many, he never took hold of this challenge. A biography awaits one of the historians of the church in America. We will never know fully how Dearden saw, felt, and interpreted the conciliar era, but a biography will be a litany of significant experiences and achievements.

Central to it will be the cardinal's role in Vatican II; Dearden experienced the council as a member of the Doctrinal Commission. Years later he could recount from memory intricate debates about single words in a conciliar text. This detailed knowledge of the history and documents of Vatican II made him a singularly valuable voice in setting the direction for the implementation of the council in the United States. He was chairman of the subcommittee which drafted the chapter on marriage and family in *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. The Reverend Bernard Haring, the subcommittee's secretary, wrote later that Dearden's leadership was the key factor in shaping this important part of the council's teaching. Cardinal Bernardin noted in his homily at Cardinal Dearden's funeral that Pope Paul VI had sent a personal note of gratitude to Dearden for his work.

As is often the case, one accomplishment led to another assignment. What made the writing on the chapter on marriage and family particularly important was the concurrent work being done by the papal commission on contraception. After the council, Dearden was asked to join the papal commission and to chair a critical working session with major figures in Catholic theology who had come to opposing conclusions during the work of the commission. His exact role is not now known, and may even be lost to history. But the appointment itself reflected the high regard in which he was held.



The post-conciliar period found Dearden in the pivotal leadership role of the hierarchy in the United States. Elected twice as president of the episcopal conference, he spearheaded its reorganization and gave it a wholly new stature and importance in the life of the church. Elected by his brother bishops to attend all the synods from 1969 through 1977, he was invited as a "father of Vatican II" by Pope John Paul II to attend the Extraordinary Synod of 1985. In 1976 he confidently led the "Call to Action" process of consultation through uncharted waters of dialogue in the church.

Dearden's ministry was, of course, rooted in the local church, the archdiocese of Detroit. The details of this part of his ministry are least well known to me. Here was a bishop enthusiastic about and committed to the implementation of Vatican II: interpreting the continuity of and changes in Catholic life; reshaping the church's institutions and strengthening the faith of its people; supporting the ministry of priests and religious, and suffering the loss of both; calling the laity to new roles in the church; and assuring the presence of the church's voice in American society, traumatized as it was by war and racial conflict in the sixties and seventies.

Judging by the testimony of those who served with him and were served by him in Detroit, one has the strong sense that at that level of ecclesial life Dearden fulfilled another of the definitions of leadership cited by Msgr. Ellis in his article. Quoting Abraham Kaplan, Ellis observed that "to be able to lead others, a man must be willing to go forward alone." John Dearden went forward and many followed for the good of the church in the United States.

At the Mass celebrated to observe his retirement, the cardinal drew his final reflection from St. Augustine's closing lines of *The City of God*: "I am done. With God's help I have kept my promise. This, I think, is all I promised to do when I began this huge work. From all who think that I have said either too little or too much, I beg pardon; and those who are satisfied. I ask, not to thank me, but to join me in rejoicing and thanking God. Amen." □



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# BLAMING THE VILLAINS, NOT THE VICTIMS

## JOHN PAUL II & THE SUPERPOWERS

ROBERT E. WHITE

The Soviet Union and the United States share a persistent tendency to look for and find trouble in the developing world; the invasion of Afghanistan and the search for military solutions to the upheavals in Central America are but two recent examples. Who benefits from this compulsion to see outside conspiracies in authentic rebellion, this refusal to understand revolution on its own terms? Military interventions not only undermine the prestige of the meddling power but turn whole countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America into killing fields. Hundreds of thousands dead and five million homeless form the legacy of the war in Afghanistan; the struggle in Angola has decimated the population and nearly destroyed one of the few prosperous economies of Africa; while in El Salvador 60,000 civilian deaths and over a million internal and external refugees have resulted from the U.S.-backed war—with no end in sight.

The appearance of two major documents with radically different interpretations of the proper relations between the superpowers and developing world serves to define the issues. In his recent encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, Pope John Paul II says that poor countries have become victims of superpower confrontation, the result: proxy wars, the arms race, and neglect of the immense problems of human development. From the U.S. foreign policy establishment comes a major report, *Discriminate Deterrence*, the product of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, an official, blue ribbon commission charged by President Reagan to rethink U.S. national security policy. The report was authorized by the Defense Department and the National Security Council. Co-chairmen of the Commission are Fred Ikle, a former undersecretary of defense, and Albert Wohlstetter, an expert on nuclear strategy. Included among the Commission's membership are two former National Security Advisers, Henry A. Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. The report analyzes the changing security environment over the next twenty years and gives important attention to what it calls "the United States posture in regional conflicts throughout the world."

*Sollicitudo* reinforces many of the teachings of previous papal documents on the need for peace through global justice. This encyclical will be remembered, however, for its trenchant criticism of the role of the superpower blocs in the developing world. The pope finds each superpower guilty of manipulating poor nations in an effort to guarantee its own security and to gain advantage over the rival bloc. John Paul II states unequivocally that "war and military preparations are the major enemy of the integral development of peoples." The pope urges the superpowers to turn away from neocolonialism and confrontation that bring about "wars of proxy through the manipulation of local conflicts."

The pope finds the USSR and the U.S. each guilty in its own way of "a tendency toward imperialism," a conclusion fiercely attacked by conservative critics. He then asks a provocative question: "In what way and to what extent are these two systems capable of change and modernization so as to favor or promote a true and integral development of peoples and nations in modern society?"

Only a few years ago, it would have been unthinkable for any serious political commentator, let alone this anti-Communist pope, to equate the two systems and, in effect, to question which was the more supple, innovative, and responsive. *Sollicitudo* judges harshly both liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, singling out for special condemnation, "the all-consuming desire for profit" and the "thirst for power...at any price." Yet the pope does not exclude the possibility that both systems can, with new attitudes, play a positive role in the developing world, and he sees some signs of hope, particularly in the successful peace-keeping efforts of international organizations.

On several fronts, the USSR has earned the re-evaluation implicit in the pages of *Sollicitudo*. Soviet troops are pulling out of Afghanistan. Negotiations designed to remove Cuban and South African troops from Angola and bring independence to Namibia are proceeding with Moscow's encouragement. Pressures from the Soviets have resulted in Vietnam's moving to end the occupation of Kampuchea. Whatever the ultimate

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fate of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, it is clear that General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and his new foreign policy team are rethinking and reassessing their country's relationship with the developing world.

*Sollicitudo* raises the question whether either East or West has the capacity to put an end to policies that have resulted in oppression and exploitation for the poor nations of the earth. John Paul II states the problem this way not because he sees a "moral equivalency" between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism as conservative critics have charged. A close reading of the encyclical leads to quite a different interpretation. The pope may be concerned because just as the USSR appears ready to play a more constructive role in reducing superpower involvement in regional conflicts, the U.S. appears increasingly committed to militarism as the primary tool for advancing its interests in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

As if to confirm John Paul II's worst fears, the publication of *Sollicitudo* was followed closely by the appearance of *Discriminate Deterrence*. The authors dismiss *perestroika* and *glasnost* as unlikely to change the Soviet Union's "antagonistic stance...rooted in seventy years of Soviet and 400 years of Tsarist history." *Discriminate Deterrence* would imprison U.S. policymakers inside the same flawed interpretation of the original containment policy which has afflicted U.S. policy for more than a generation. It assumes, without advancing any evidence, that revolutions in poor countries are driven by Soviet aggression and recommends that the U.S. prepare for a wider range of threats. Other than recognizing that a strategic war with the USSR is now unlikely, the report breaks little new ground except for its recommendations on how to "help protect U.S. interests and allies in the third world," and on this subject the document has some breathtaking things to say.

The Commission sees the battleground with the USSR shifting south, to "turbulence in the third world." The report does not shrink from an active role for the U.S. in these regional conflicts. To the contrary, the authors appear to have structured their thesis so as to justify never-ending interventions in the affairs of other nations. Without the barest reference to existing treaty obligations that forbid such interference, the study recommends categorically that our government should support selected anti-Communist insurgencies "where important U.S. objectives might be served and U.S. support might favorably affect the outcome."

According to the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, the U.S. faces "protracted war" in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Although a combat role for our armed forces in regional conflicts is ruled out other than "for the most exceptional cases," such as Grenada, the report urges our policymakers to take "low intensity conflict much more seriously." Low intensity conflict is defined as "insurgencies, organized terrorism, paramilitary crime, sabotage, and other forms of violence in a shadow area between peace and open warfare involving large units." Management of U.S. involvement in low intensity conflict should be carried out, the report says, by the CIA and primarily through covert action, thereby enabling our government to "maintain official silence" because "neighboring countries that provide access to our bases for the freedom fighters often prefer that the U.S. government role not be officially acknowledged."

This obvious reference to Honduras and the *contra* war against the Sandinistas contains no analysis of the conditions under which the U.S. should assist anti-Communist forces, no discussion of *contra* involvement in crimes related to narcotics trafficking, firearms, and misuse of public funds. Nor does the report contain any warning that our sponsorship of proxy wars can fail and thereby create, as in the case of Nicaragua, the impression that a small, weak nation has faced down and defeated the U.S. The Commission does recognize that "conflicts in the world...have had and will have an adverse cumulative effect...on American credibility among allies and friends...." Commission members do not acknowledge that in the eyes of the world our credibility has been damaged, not because these conflicts exist, but because of our ill-conceived and ineffectual intervention in them.

To insure that our sponsorship of proxy wars meets with more success in the future, the report puts forward as a routine recommendation the chilling proposal that, in order to maximize the technological advantages of the United States, "we should use our most sophisticated weapons" in third-world conflicts, including the employment of "smart missiles...that can apply force in a discriminate fashion and avoid collateral damage to civilians." There are certainly sufficient clues in the report to indicate that the authors have Central America very much in mind when they recommend the use of these precision-guided missiles "to influence military outcomes in regional wars."

The artless cynicism that would place high-tech weapons in the hands of military-dominated governments is matched by the recommendation that we also provide these rulers with advanced information-processing systems able "to store, sort, retrieve, and collate enormous amounts of data about the insurgent or terrorist organizations and individual saboteurs and terrorists." In practical terms this means collaborating with ruthless military leaders, such as Roberto d'Aubuisson of El Salvador and his murderous counterparts in other countries, by giving them the capacity to classify human rights activists, church leaders, and university teachers as "individual saboteurs and terrorists." In all these recommendations, *Discriminate Deterrence* conveniently ignores the fact that in guerrilla war the line between combatant and noncombatant is vague and ill-defined. For the Salvadoran military and the Nicaraguan *contras* there are few who qualify as noncombatants.

Zbigniew Brzezinski has discussed his interpretations of the Commission's work in a speech to the National War College. The former National Security Adviser said, "In the 1970s, nuclear weapons were still fundamentally systems for the infliction of mass destruction," but today "these weapons are



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susceptible to being used for highly discriminatory military missions with relatively little, if that is your desire, collateral societal damage....'' Brzezinski did not say under what circumstances ''societal damage'' should be our ''desire''; he did refer to the employment of smart missiles equipped with tactical nuclear weapons aimed at ''discriminating targets in areas other than Europe.''

These modest proposals demonstrate traditional policymakers' fixations with sophisticated weaponry to cope with the stresses and strains inevitable in a world where the structures of domination and dependence constantly generate new social conflicts. Or, as George Kennan once said in reference to our preoccupation with nuclear war, ''a state of mind explicable only by some inability to face the normal hazards and vicissitudes of the human predicament.''

This compulsion to deploy sophisticated weapons against rebel forces, armed only with rudimentary weapons, can also be seen as one more manifestation of what some would call racism and others the persistent inability of affluent, aging, white America to come to grips in any rational or human way with the poor, young, nonwhite peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. *Discriminate Deterrence* shows no understanding whatever that ferment in poor countries begins with the legitimate search for some countervailing power that will give the people minimal security against the military and economic elites that control their countries, often with our backing. John Paul II makes this point when he urges the replacement of corrupt, dictatorial, and authoritarian forms of government with democratic and participatory political institutions that can transform mutual distrust into collaboration.

In its analysis and recommendations, *Sollicitudo* directly challenges the Reagan policy toward Central America. This is consistent with the pope's unswerving support for the Contadora negotiation effort and the Central American Peace Agreement. Guided by the same ideology that inspires *Discriminate Deterrence*, President Reagan has described the Central American Peace Treaty as ''fatally flawed.'' He has gone against the express wishes of the five Central American presidents by attempting to continue aid to the *contras* and by discouraging peace negotiations in El Salvador.

The presidents joined with the revolutionary leader of Nicaragua to insist that an end to assistance to all insurgent forces was indispensable. They agreed on a formula to advance democracy in all their countries. They also agreed not to permit their territory to be used for destabilizing actions against their neighbors. In words that echo those of the pontiff, the Central American presidents rejected the Reagan administration's policies and stated that reliance on military solutions has for many generations frustrated their ''legitimate aspirations for peace and social justice, for liberty and reconciliation.''

Once the leaders of Central America rejected the *contra* presence and signed the treaty, it only made sense for the U.S. to negotiate a separate agreement with Nicaragua which would satisfy our legitimate national security objectives. Indeed, in August 1987, this was precisely what the White House negotiator for Central America, Ambassador Philip Habib, wanted to do. The Reagan hard-liners, however, refused to approve Habib's mission to Nicaragua because they knew that Habib would return with an agreement that would remove Cuban troops from Nicaragua and a pledge that that government would never again permit foreign troops on its soil.

Reagan administration officials deny to Congress that their intent is to overthrow the Sandinistas and they justify their refusal to negotiate with Nicaragua on the ground that we cannot trust the Sandinistas. In diplomacy only amateurs speak of trust when dealing with adversaries. We do not—and should not—trust the USSR or Communist China. Yet this lack of trust does not justify refusal to work out mutually advantageous agreements. Our goal must always be to achieve treaties which serve the interests of both parties and then hold the other signatory power accountable for any violations. If the Reagan administration believes it can hold the USSR accountable it can hardly argue that we cannot demand strict compliance from a poverty-stricken nation of three million practically on our doorstep.

The Reagan doctrine, as advanced by the authors of *Discriminate Deterrence*, would appear to assert the right to overthrow any government regardless of that government's willingness to satisfy our national security requirements. The members of the Commission know that both the USSR and Cuba have offered to cut out arms shipments to Nicaragua provided the U.S. will abide by the provisions of the Central American Peace Agreement and cease aid to the *contras*. The report's authors must also be aware that President Daniel Ortega has repeatedly pledged not to permit foreign bases, troops, or weapons on Nicaraguan territory. He has indicated a readiness to negotiate verifiable reductions in their military forces and to ban offensive weapons.

The real fear reflected in *Discriminate Deterrence* is not that the Sandinistas will align with the USSR and Cuba. That result is, after all, the logical consequence of the proxy war we wage against Nicaragua and our refusal to negotiate. The true fear of some Commission members is that if peace comes to Central America, the Sandinistas may regain their momentum and actually carry out an independent nonaligned revolution. Should Nicaragua demonstrate its capacity to carry out a revolution independent of Soviet and Cuban support then the Commission's thesis that third-world conflicts automatically threaten our interests disappears.

If *Discriminate Deterrence* pays scant attention to the collapse of our efforts to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, it brims with enthusiasm for the Reagan policy in El Salvador. The report says: ''Because so many Americans are predisposed to pessimism about our role in the third world, it is worth pointing to one recent example that, against high odds did very well: the saving of democracy in El Salvador.''

It will of course be news to Salvadorans that they live in a democracy. With death squads reviving their grisly trade, with military dominance of society reinforced by the quadrupled



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size of the army and security forces, and with the villages in the five northeastern provinces suffering the most intense aerial bombardment in the history of this hemisphere, it takes a highly particular view of the world to see in all of this a democracy saved.

The one indisputable result of the $3 billion the Reagan administration has thrown at the Salvadoran problem has been the emergence of the most tenacious, resilient, and resourceful guerrilla movement ever seen in the Western Hemisphere. These revolutionaries have not only survived, they have retained their control over substantial territory and extended their political cadres into every province of the country. Although the army has increased its effectiveness, time works against the government because the economy is in ruins. The jobless rate of over 50 percent is a direct result of the decapitalization of the country as the rich export into foreign banks every dollar of hard currency they can find. Put these factors together and what confronts us is not "success," but a mounting failure of major proportions.

With the 1984 election of José Napoleón Duarte, the U.S. had the key to turn a failing policy into a success. By then any illusion of a quick military victory had gone and U.S. military advisors spoke cautiously of "five more years" before the guerrillas would be defeated. Duarte presented another option. He was the one leader of El Salvador with the talent, will, and moral authority to bridge the gap between the center and the left and to bring a negotiated end to the war.

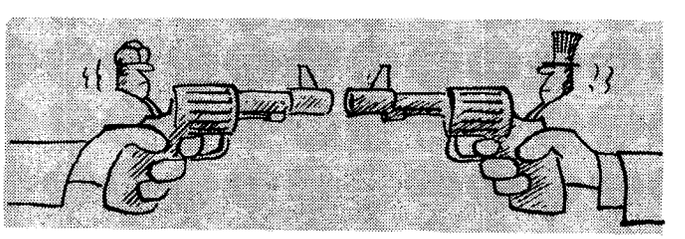
Duarte was able to thread his way over, under, and around many obstacles. He succeeded in opening up political space for opposition forces and increased freedeom of the press, but he was never able to overcome the Reagan administration's refusal to back any negotiation that agreed to what it calls "power sharing." Instead of compromise, Duarte was able to offer only worthless guarantees of safety from death-squad retaliation should the rebels lay down their arms and enter political life.

The policy of the Reagan administration turned Duarte from a leader, with a constituency that included 90 percent of the Salvadoran people who wanted a negotiated end to the war, into a hapless figure whose chief role turned out to be as lobbyist with the U.S. Congress for ever increasing military assistance programs. With the role of mediator denied him by a U.S. policy that demanded military victory, Duarte had no presidential role, and his Christian Democratic party, lacking any political program and sensing impending defeat, fell prey to wholesale corruption.

In 1989, the extreme, right-wing ARENA party of Roberto D'Aubuisson is heavily favored to win the elections and the presidency. Many poor Salvadorans will vote for this neofascist movement not out of sympathy with its program but because the first lesson any *campesino* learns in this lawless land is "identify with the man with the gun." In rural areas, the army and security forces hold the power of life and death. With few exceptions, most officers support the ARENA party and its program to control El Salvador through a concentration of power in the military and economic elites. Not only do the *campesinos* suspect that the military commanders know how they vote, they also know with a metaphysical certitude that their lives will never improve through the casting of a ballot. Regular elections have been held in El Salvador for more than a half-century while the lot of the poor has steadily worsened.

If, as expected, the ARENA party wins the presidency in March 1989, it will take only a short time—perhaps a year—to demonstrate to the Salvadoran people that this reactionary party stands for nothing but officially sanctioned violence and repression. At that point a second Salvadoran revolution will begin to take shape. With priests, labor union leaders, and *campesino* organizers regarded as enemies of the state by ARENA, with more of the productive capacity of the country destroyed each month by both sides, the country will polarize and the extreme left, as the alternative to the status quo, will prove the chief beneficiary. The tragic prediction for El Salvador is a continued military stalemate with the revolutionaries increasing their capacity to paralyze the economy. Lacking any hope for a political solution or for an end to suffering, mass movements mobilizing large numbers of angry, unemployed people can be expected to take to the streets. If history is any guide, the Salvadoran right wing will respond to this challenge by gunning down unarmed demonstrators. The repression will serve only to lose the government both internal and external support. In the face of increased human rights abuses by the military, pressures will mount for a negotiated solution. By that time, of course, the government will be weakened, the left will be strengthened, and cries will be heard from both San Salvador and Washington for dramatic action to save the country from communism.

*Sollicitudo* and *Discriminate Deterrence* represent fundamentally irreconcilable views of the world. John Paul II finds that military responses to security concerns work "to the detriment of the autonomy, freedom of decision, and even the territorial integrity of the weaker nations." He condemns the manipulation of underdeveloped nations by the superpowers, and states that in Latin America "liberation" is the fundamental category and first principle of action. To the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy our intervention in third-world struggles is a necessary response to Soviet-inspired revolution and is of such towering importance that "American efforts to influence military outcomes in regional wars will call for the use of our most sophisticated weaponry, even though this could compromise its effectiveness in a U.S.-Soviet war." The report advocates the building of a counterinsurgency capacity through "security assistance at a





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higher level and with fewer legislative restrictions to inhibit its effectiveness."

To make their case for the U.S. as an activist counter-revolutionary power, the Commission defies all rules of logic. At their hands, speculation becomes supposition, supposition conjecture, and conjecture the basis for finding threats to our security. The report's authors move from instinct to accusation to judgment with the facility common to those who have already arrived at the cure regardless of the nature of the disease. Before interests can be defended, with smart missiles or by lesser measures, those interests must first be identified and defined. Yet the Commission's report steadfastly refuses to enter any coherent discussion of U.S. interests in Central America or anywhere else.

No serious analysis of U.S. security concerns in Central America has ever held that threats originate from the region itself. The Kissinger Commission report of 1982 said, "Indigenous reform movements, even indigenous revolutions, are not themselves a security concern of the U.S." Standard security doctrine holds that the strife and turmoil which accompany rebellion give the USSR the opening to assist pro-Communist governments to power and these regimes, it is argued, will lend their country to the USSR for its strategic objectives. *Discriminate Deterrence* makes no attempt to analyze causes of Central America revolutions nor does it try to make the case that the Soviets are interested in gaining a strategic foothold in Central America. Rather the report simply proceeds with its far-reaching recommendations on the unproved and unsustainable assumption that all rebellions are fatally infected with a Marxist-Leninist lesion and that the root of all revolutions can ultimately be traced to the same source of the expansionary Soviet Communist state.

*Discriminate Deterrence* not only fails adequately to describe our interests in Central America, it contains no discussion whatever of what courses of action are open to the U.S. should low intensity conflict, covert action, and smart missiles fail to crush the revolutionary impulse. The report also leaves out of its calculus the profoundly divisive effects on our own society of any policy which attempts to crush third-world rebellions with sophisticated weaponry.

Soviet imperialism throughout the world has been a fact. In Central America, however, U.S. support for brutal, military-dominated governments has been a more demonstrable fact. As currently practiced, the security of the U.S. demands the subordination of Central America's social priorities to our supposed national security requirements. This has meant the establishment of veneer democracies where the armed forces, with U.S. toleration, decide who can and cannot participate in the political and social dynamics of the country. Yet domestic leaders of other countries have an equivalent obligation to ensure the safety and security of their citizens. As one country's absolute security can represent another's absolute insecurity, the challenge for our new president is to harmonize the security requirements of the U.S. with the security objectives of other countries. This task will be made easier when it is understood that the threat to the security of most developing countries comes not from external sources but from the internal conflicts caused by the need to construct more just societies in which authority functions within the law. In countries such as El Salvador, the fundamental duty of the state to protect the basic human rights of the citizen has been stood on its head and law-abiding citizens may be tortured, disappeared, and killed at the whim of the security forces and their death squads, which enjoy absolute immunity from legal sanction.

It is no service to the laudable cause of democracy to insist that revolutionary societies immediately create democratic governments. As Carlos Fuentes has pointed out, "Democracy never entered Washington's calculations during the seventy years that it dominated Nicaraguan politics, between the fall of Santos Zelaya in 1909 and the fall of Anastasio Somoza in 1979. It is but one more hypocrisy to disguise an obsession for dominance restored as a democratic crusade."

Democracy can begin with revolution. Yet revolution will almost never move directly into democracy. A transitional phase is required while the new government abolishes the hated features of the old dictatorship and experiments with the new unaccustomed role of consolidating and institutionalizing power. Before a nation can become democratic it must first become independent—the national identity of a people is a necessary precondition for democracy. The Sandinistas, for all their faults, have created a nation; José Napoleón Duarte, for all his virtues, has not.

Whatever threat a revolutionary state may be able to direct our way, the armed might of the U.S. is more than equal to the task of deterring it. A threat can never be more powerful than its ability to evade or survive retaliation. Where the security interests of our country are at stake we should not follow the authors of *Discriminate Deterrence* and place the safety of our country in the hands of surrogates of questionable aims and abilities. If U.S. security interests are indeed at risk, let us freely accept the responsibility for defending them with our own resources, rather than laying that burden on the bizarre mix of patriots, pawns, and mercenaries the Reagan administration pretentiously calls "freedom fighters."

The recommendations of *Discriminate Deterrence* would tie U.S. policy to the moribund forces that have traditionally controlled Central America through violence and repression. *Sollicitudo* recognizes that it is not only inevitable but desirable that an array of new forces will emerge to establish new societies and new governments. If the U.S. wishes to protect its security in Central America then we must fashion policies that will gradually transform potential enemies into friends. But if we continue the reckless misuse of power advocated by *Discriminate Deterrence* then we will make permanent enemies of potential allies, progressively alienate our democratic friends in Western Europe and Latin America, and betray the values of Western civilization urged on us by John Paul's important and timely encyclical. □



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# ISRAEL GOES TO THE POLLS

## THE FUTURE OF A DIVIDED NATION

MITCHELL COHEN

On November 1, Israelis will go to the ballot box in one of the most important elections since the founding of the Jewish state. The last general election produced a political stalemate. Neither of the country's major blocs secured a decisive edge. The consequence was the curious phenomenon known as a "national unity government." Two parties in basic disagreement on most policies, but in agreement to "rotate" the premiership between their respective leaders, would run the cabinet. Imagine, if you will, an American government under President Michael Dukakis with George Bush serving as both vice-president and secretary of state that, as of 1991, becomes a government of President George Bush with Michael Dukakis as vice-president and secretary of state.

In the Israeli case, the Labor party's Shimon Peres became prime minister in 1984 and the Likud's Yitzhak Shamir became vice-premier and foreign minister; in 1986, they exchanged jobs. Labor, a social democratic party, favors a flexible policy of territorial compromise with Israel's Arab neighbors in order to attain peace, while the right-wing Likud opposes conceding any land Israel conquered in the 1967 war. Shamir warns the Israeli public that even partial withdrawal poses a "mortal threat" to the country's future; Peres asks "are the territories defending us or are we defending the territories?"

During Peres's premiership Israel withdrew from its Lebanese imbroglio, and began to stabilize an economy reeling from the reckless policies pursued by Likud governments between 1977 and 1984. Shamir's two years at the helm were characterized by his successful thwarting of Peres's effort to convene an international peace conference, and the government's inability to suppress the Palestinian *intifadah* (uprising) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Ironically, it is Peres's long-time rival within Labor, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who presides over the heavy-handed attempts to quell the rebellion. And although Rabin's personal popularity has risen, the *intifadah* has helped the Likud politically.

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Israel's population has faced a major war every decade since the 1940s. It is deeply divided on solving the country's very pressing problems, including peace, the Palestinians, and an economy again beginning to sour, and this will be reflected in the election results. Indications are that the outcome may not be far different from the last time. What is different, however, is the low-keyed nature of the campaign so far. The 1981 and 1984 contests were the most raucous in Israel's short history. The very existence of the national unity government seems to have lowered the generally feverish political temperature of the country. But now that the Jewish religious holidays are over, the contest is bound to intensify.

No party has ever won a majority in Israeli elections and, consequently, coalition governments have been the norm. This is partly the result of an electoral system of proportional representation in which citizens vote not for individuals but for candidate lists, nominated and rank-ordered by each party. Depending on the percentage of the national vote received by a party, that proportion of its list becomes "MKs" (members of the Knesset, Israel's parliament). For example, if Labor wins a third of the vote, it will get a third of the seats in the legislature (forty MKs). Atop its list is a party's candidate for premier—Peres for Labor and Shamir for the Likud, this time around.

This system, criticized as "ultra-democratic" by some, encourages a proliferation of minor parties, especially since Israel has a very low "threshold" clause in its electoral law. To be seated, a list requires but one percent of the total vote (in contrast, West Germany's threshold is five percent). This is how Kakh, Meir Kahane's extremist party, obtained its one seat in 1984. In American terms, one need only imagine who, or what, might get elected to Congress under a similar system. Kahane is battling an attempt to bar his party from running on the grounds that it is racist. To form a stable government the largest party seeks allies among the smaller ones who obtain cabinet portfolios and other concessions. Until 1977, this was always a matter of the secular Labor party or its chief predecessor, Mapai, usually in a "historic partnership" with the—once but no longer moderate—religious nationalists of the smaller National Religious party (NRP).

Surveys point to a fairly even base of support for both sides of the political spectrum today. The next government will be determined, on the one hand, by the estimated 150,000 undecided voters, and on the other, by which major party can co-opt



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the smaller ones. The dovish Civil Rights List and the Arab parties will never back a Likud government, and the ultranationalists of *Tehiyah* (renaissance) have the same attitude toward Labor. Thus much will depend on several fractious and increasingly fragmented religious parties, which include both hawks and doves. Since there are more hawks than doves, Likud will have the advantage here.

From the 1930s until 1977, the salient characteristic of internal politics in the Zionist movement and (after 1948) in Israel was the dominance of the left. While never achieving an electoral majority, Labor was by far the largest party; it led the struggle for statehood, and, as the country's architect, it was regarded as its natural governor. Labor historically championed policies combining toughness with flexibility in the Arab-Israeli conflict; it accepted, for example, the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Palestinian Arab states in 1947, despite the furious opposition of Menachem Begin and the right. From the end of Israel's War of Liberation in 1949 through 1967, the vast majority of Israelis saw the question of borders as settled. Few took seriously the boisterous irredentism that was the right wing's hallmark. The extremism of Begin and his backers marginalized them in the young state. In the 1960s, however, the right began to broaden its base. And when, in June 1967, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol included Begin in the national unity government formed to face the threat of the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian armies mobilized on Israel's borders, the right-wing leader gained new legitimacy.

The Israeli victory in the Six Day War destroyed an overt military threat, but it also reopened the question of borders. Eshkol's initial postwar policy—willingness to exchange lands taken in the war for peace—gradually eroded as the Arab world refused to come to the bargaining table. Concurrently, the nationalist and religious right within Israel pressed for keeping the territories and slowly gained support. The "young guard" of the National Religious party was swept by messianic currents and as its strength grew, the NRP's "historic partnership" with Labor became more tenuous.

Finally, in 1977, the sea change took place. Labor had been tarnished by Israeli losses in the Yom Kippur War, its image was compromised by scandals and a split, and there was a justified popular perception that it was exhausted and closed to new faces and new ideas. Israel's long-dominant party collapsed at the polls and Begin formed a governing coalition with the NRP and others.

Just as the Likud had to learn to govern, Labor had to learn to be an opposition party. Neither was very good at its new role. With the single, important exception of the Camp David Accords, Begin's tenure was characterized by mismanagement of both foreign and domestic affairs, culminating in the Lebanon war of 1982 and rampant inflation. When Begin stepped down and Shamir became premier in 1983, the right wing lost its charismatic father figure, but none of its dogmatism. (The secretary of Begin's cabinet, Arye Naor, was expel-

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led from the party for supporting Peres's plan for an international peace conference.)

In the Likud, the seventy-three-year-old Shamir's power is now circumscribed by the battle, already underway, to succeed him. His supporters were somewhat weakened in pre-election jockeying last spring. Former defense minister Ariel Sharon and Moroccan-born David Levy were strengthened. Counterbalancing them, however, is an emerging younger generation that will, after this election, be a force to contend with. Prominent among them are Begin's son, Benjamin, and former Israeli UN ambassador, Benjamin Netanyahu.

After its defeat in 1977, Labor made it clear that it was not interested in playing a junior role in a Likud government. Following the 1981 elections, in which Peres was just edged out by Begin, Labor took the same stand. By 1984, however, Peres saw Labor's re-entry into government as a desperate matter, both personally and politically. It was his third unsuccessful election at the head of the party list, and his role as its leader would have been threatened had Labor returned to the opposition benches. This was forestalled when he became prime minister. However, both Peres and Rabin, the senior Labor party figures, will face challenges if Labor loses on November 1.

Politically, Peres is not only fearful of what another Likud government—with Shamir as premier and the possible return of Sharon to the defense ministry—might bring, he is, according to a Labor activist close to him, haunted by the possibility that had Labor accepted Begin's offer of junior partnership in the 1981 cabinet, there might have been no Lebanon war the following year. For all these reasons recent statements by Peres that he will not join another "unity" coalition must be taken cautiously. Should he try to do so, however, he will face stiff opposition within his own party.

Labor presents an attractive slate this year. In internal party elections late last spring, young doves did especially well and the grand old man of the Israeli peace movement, Arie Lova Eliav, secured a "safe-spot" on Labor's Knesset list. (Eliav, a former party secretary general, split from Labor in the early 1970s because of a dispute with Premier Golda Meir on the Palestinian question.)

Women and Jews of Middle Eastern origins are much better represented among Labor's 1988 nominees than they are among Likud's. (In the Knesset elected in 1984, 23 percent of Labor MKs were of Afro-Asian background as opposed to 17 percent of the Likud.) Nonetheless, the "oriental" vote is a weak spot for Labor. The Likud's "no nonsense" approach towards the Arabs appeals to many Jews who came to Israel from Arab lands where they were badly mistreated. And shortcomings in the immigrant absorption policies of Labor governments in the 1950s left long-standing resentments towards the former ruling party.

Labor's plan to fight this fall's campaign on the peace issue was upset by King Hussein's unexpected renunciation of Jordanian claims to the West Bank and Gaza this past summer. Labor's peace program called for a negotiated settlement with Jordan or a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to achieve a territorial compromise. The assumption was that Amman's participation would stymie the emergence of a radical Palestinian state, feared by most Israelis. Labor has now shifted to a somewhat ambiguous formula according to which it would first seek an interim agreement with Palestinians willing both to recognize Israel's existence and renounce terrorism.

But Peres has been also sending out some important new signals. In early September, he declared that, "We don't want to oppress the Palestinians; we are ready for an historic compromise." Later in the month he stated that he wasn't interested in "the biography" of a Palestinian negotiating partner. Rather, "We are going to look at his positions." This is a way of saying that significant change on the Palestinian side, including within the PLO, might find an Israeli response.

The Likud exploits the trepidations most Israelis share when it comes to war and peace. Outside observers often discount these fears because of Israel's military prowess and the Likud's habit of conflating its irredentist nationalist goals with the country's self-defense as a whole. One must differentiate, however, between Likud rhetoric and the very real security issues confronting the Jewish state—issues of equal concern to Labor. Bearing in mind that the Mideast, a nervous region, is prone to rapid transformations, consider the following constellation:

- The arms race continues at a frantic pace, and not just in the zone of the Iran-Iraq war. In this decade Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel will invest some $75 billion in increasingly sophisticated weapons. Since the Arab armies vastly outnumber Israel's—whose strategists have, since 1948, assumed at least three to one odds against the Jewish state—maintaining a technological edge is crucial for Jerusalem.

Israel is a small country with slightly over four million people, and virtually everyone there has lost family and friends in the past conflicts. (Since 1948, some 11,000 Israelis have died in wars, and another 800 in terrorist attacks or counter-terror retaliations.) A report in the Israeli press last summer estimated that another war against a coalition of Arab states (including Egypt and Jordan) would result in 40,000 Israeli casualties (10,000 dead and 30,000 wounded) at the cost of $1 billion. While Israel's peace with Egypt seems secure and Jordan has no appetite for war, Israelis must plan for all military eventualities because of the instability of the area.

- Syria, headed by the brutal Hafez al-Assad, vows it will attain military "parity" with Israel. While this prospect is distant, and while Damascus is isolated in the Arab world because it supported Iran in the Gulf war, Syria is Israel's greatest immediate threat. It has doubled the number of its army divisions since 1982, and its armored corps now has more tanks than Nazi Germany used on the eastern front during all of World War II.

Most dangerous, however, is Syria's deployment of a vast arsenal of advanced Soviet missiles capable of striking virtual-



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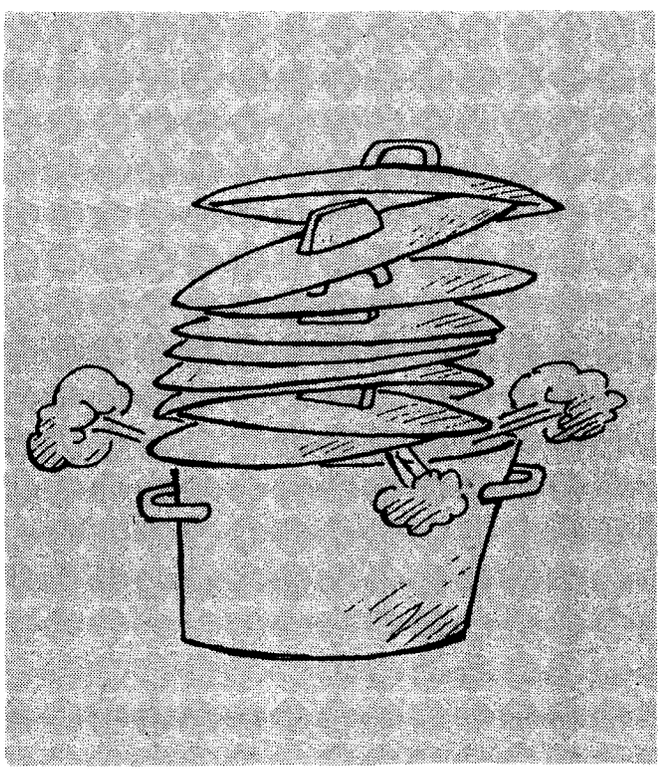
ly anywhere in Israel in approximately five minutes—from civilian targets to airfields to military assembly points. As this provides perilously short warning time before a devastating attack, one cannot rule out a pre-emptive Israeli action to eliminate these missiles.

● With the end of the Gulf conflict, the future role of Iraq becomes uncertain. Baghdad has some 6,500 tanks and an experienced war machine whose size has quadrupled since the war began. Its 475,000 front-line troops, 450,000 "Popular Army" troops, and 75,000 reservists equals almost a quarter of the population of Israel. In the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Iraq sent troops and two armored divisions into the fray. However, it is unlikely that Iraqi land forces would play a major role in a future conflagration as they would have to cross the territory either of Syria, which harbors deep animosity towards Iraq, or Jordan.

The more significant Iraqi threat comes from the air. In the last phase of the Iran-Iraq war the capabilities of the Iraqi air force improved substantially, especially in long-range strategic bombing. Iraq has a substantial arsenal of mobile SCUD missiles that can deliver the chemical weapons and poison gases already employed against Iran into Israeli civilian centers. The muted international response to Iraqi use of lethal mustard, nerve, and cyanide gases, all outlawed by the 1925 Geneva Treaty, rings loud in Jerusalem. And Libya has a factory to produce such weapons.

Israelis also pay attention to the fate of the Kurds. This national group, which has its own language and culture and was promised "Kurdistan" after World War I, has as strong a case for self-determination as any people in the world today. Yet while Iraq forcibly depopulates its mountainous Kurdish regions, razes villages in over 4000 square miles, and apparently uses chemical weapons and gas against masses of civilians, creating tens of thousands of refugees, there has been, again, but modest international outrage and no action. Israelis, including those who bitterly oppose their government's policies in the occupied territories, are struck that Baghdad, committing incomparably more violence than Israel, receives infinitely less chastisement. And Yasir Arafat, currently cementing his ties with Iraq, has not had a word to say about the vicious repression of a non-Arab people's struggle for self-determination by an Arab government.



This brings us directly to the Palestinians. The combination of the *intifadah*, the rise of fundamentalist influence within it, and the refusal, or inability, of the PLO to translate the rebellion of its constituents into an intelligent political initiative, is fodder for the Likud's electoral cannons. Such an initiative, if it were to be serious, would have to include explicit recognition of Israel. There appears to be an intense debate in the PLO on this issue. The "rejectionists" in the PLO have the strength to make any such move very costly for Arafat, that is *if* he is actually inclined to make it.

The PLO chief is in a bind on all fronts: the longer he stalls, the stronger the fundamentalists in the Gaza Strip and West Bank become, and the more likely it is that the remarkable discipline of the *intifadah*—a discipline in marked contrast to the PLO itself—will break down. Here the failures of Arafat's leadership become evident. Indeed, the only major political move since the *intifadah* began almost a year ago was Hussein's waiver of the occupied lands. And Arafat's initial response was not to seize that moment as the national leader of a besieged people, but to complain that he had not been consulted. In the meantime "Hamas" ("zeal"), the Palestinian fundamentalist movement, has proclaimed that "The solution to the Palestinian question will only take place by holy war...[I]nternational conferences only waste time."

So here is another irony: although Hussein's surprise action may give the Likud an electoral advantage by undermining Peres's "Jordanian option," Israel is left with only one negotiating partner—the Palestinians. If an independent Palestinian state ever emerges in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Yitzhak Shamir will, consequently, be one of its fathers. Unless, that is, he continues to prefer an occupation that could give Israel a future of ceaseless strife resembling today's Northern Ireland. It is difficult to imagine any prospect more distant from the original Zionist dream.

Labor's difficult task, then, is to persuade anxious Israelis that however legitimate their fears, the maintenance of the status quo is a dead end that will ever tear at their country's fiber.

This much is certain: Israel will have dramatic decisions to make. What is uncertain is whether the upcoming elections will produce a government up to the challenges. As these words are written, four weeks before the vote, it is too close to call, but the Likud probably has an edge. □



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## SCREEN

# MELANCHOLY BEBOP

'BIRD' & 'PATTY'

*Bird* is a labor of love from Clint Eastwood, marked by an intelligence and sensitivity that, I admit, surprised me. Eastwood has produced and directed this film tribute to the great jazz saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker, whose postwar, bebop improvisations on the alto sax raised the instrument to lofty heights of lyrical intensity. When he was a child, Eastwood saw Parker perform and never forgot it. Now he has cashed in his chips with Warner Brothers, who reaped the enormous profits from his "Dirty Harry" movies, and persuaded the studio to sponsor this offbeat, melancholy, and moving tribute to Parker, one of the saddest artistic casualties of recent times.

*Bird* has faults: its length, its risky structure, and its cinematography. First, the film is nearly three hours long. Second, although shot in color, the film almost seems black and white at times, especially in the many nightclub scenes (one evokes the old "Birdland" on West 52nd in New York) where the performers are clad entirely in plain colors, tans and greys. Eastwood has a fetish for color schemes and dark scenes like this; his Western *Pale Rider* frequently used nighttime shots in which characters were barely visible. In *Bird*, he has a solid justification: jazz musicians are nocturnal animals. Still, the film is often hard to look at; wits have said it gives new meaning to the term "film noir." Only in the last hour of the film does the lighting become brighter—and then, ironically, as a counterpoint to Parker's darkening career.

The structure of this concluding section is strong and clear: Eastwood maps out the wrenching progression from Parker's first suicide attempt to his final dependence on drugs and a fatal heart-attack. But the earlier parts of the movie are structured elliptically: Eastwood starts with the suicide, then moves the story backward in a complicated, tangled way. Memories by one character blend into memories by another and flashbacks are layered inside flashbacks. No doubt Eastwood wanted the drama of an opening *in medias res*; no doubt there is a value in avoiding the predictability of chronological narrative. Eastwood might also have been trying to imitate in film the effects of a jazz improvisation, in which skeins of notes are strewn about abundantly, even chaotically, before final order emerges. All of this may be artistic, but many viewers will be confused.

What holds the film together is the mood and the superb acting. Eastwood is responsible for setting the first: the film eyes its subject with affection, regret, pity, and not one iota of false sentiment. Eastwood is clear about the social aspect of Parker's problem: his music was gorgeously, daringly revolutionary, and only a few could respond. But his artist is less sinned against than sinning. Eastwood doesn't glamorize the fact that Charlie Parker was a junkie, and never could command himself long enough to make the most of his marvelous musical talent. As in *Amadeus*—a film which *Bird* approaches—the artist is seen as a self-destructive adolescent who never quite grows up.

Parker is played compellingly by Forest Whitaker. His best scenes involve his recognition that he must fight addiction, and his despairing sense that he can't; one exchange at night on a beach with Dizzy Gillespie (finely acted by Samuel Wright) is especially pathetic. Whitaker also projects playful high spirits in a tour of the South on which he drags "Albino Red," jazz trumpeter Red Rodney (Michael Zelniker), a white friend who had to be falsely advertised to evade segregation laws; they also perform a short comic duet at a Brooklyn Jewish wedding.

Whitaker interacts well with Diane Venora as Parker's white wife, Chan, on whose memoirs the film is based. Venora is a smart, sultry actress with classical training who tries to ward off Whitaker's proposals with crackerjack lines like "I was born to drive men crazy." Actually, Parker's addiction almost drives her to the edge. Venora craftily projects both dire resentment and love. The couple and all their supports here make this the best acted film of 1988. And the score of the film is a jazz fan's delight.

Were the sixties and early seventies the best of times or the worst? A crop of recent films suggests they were certainly memorable. "The whole world is watching," peace demonstrators used to chant as cops moved in on them and TV cameras rolled. Now the whole world is watching Part II, or, as they say in the business, "The Sixties—the Movie." First came *Platoon* and the Vietnam war film trend; now comes *Running on Empty*, *Patty*, and the upcoming *Imagine* (on John Lennon), *1969*, and *Walking on the Moon* (on Peace Corps idealists).

*Patty* tells the story of Patricia Hearst— indeed, it was made with her collaboration and, as a result, makes one sympathize with her when she is abducted by the SLA. You recall the SLA—the Symbionese Liberation Army, sixties' radicalism reduced to the absurd. A great strength of this film is the

*Forester Whitaker as Charlie Parker*



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economic editing that brings back, in a sequence of brief tableaux, the SLA moment in the sun of media attention: the abduction of Hearst; her audio and video tapes from "underground"; the SLA demand for distribution of free food in the slums as ransom; Hearst's ultimate enlistment in their cause as "Tania" (the name of Che Guevara's last lover); their wild nomenclature (adopting names like "Cinque" and "Cujo"); their arcane symbolism (the seven-headed cobra flag against which Tania posed, submachine gun in arms). Best or worst of times, the film makes perfectly clear this era in our history was the wackiest.

Patty is played by English actress (and daughter of Vanessa Redgrave) Natasha Richardson, who brings to the role a fine, flat, California accent and a visage deliberately empty of character and intellect. This seems to be true to life, even by Ms. Hearst's own acknowledgment. It creates both strengths and weaknesses for the film. Presenting Patty as a tabula rasa makes it easy to accept the process whereby she accepted SLA propaganda and eventually joined in their bank robberies; it also creates a problem of empathy, since it is hard to care about a cipher. It's not just her accent that's flat; it's her soul.

Perhaps this characterization is unavoidable. But adding to the difficulty of caring about Patty is the style of Director Paul Schrader (previous director of *Mishima* and original writer for *The Last Temptation of Christ*). Schrader is undoubtedly skilled with a camera; his cutting is exceptional. But his expressionism is so hyperbolical that it makes the story seem even colder; the first half-hour of this movie involves such a display of technique that emotional issues seem secondary.

To imitate Miss Hearst's physical experiences when first abducted, Schrader shoots from inside a closet where she was kept for six weeks; the camera angles are always low, the images dark. Including her fantasies of being buried alive, or living blindfolded for the rest of her life, helps to some degree. But Schrader has caught everything physical about her disorientation while neglecting the psychological. Oddly, what is completely missing from the film is terror.

In the second half, some resonance is gained by Schrader's satiric thrusts at SLA madness: the racial posturing, sexual hypocrisy, the seas of jargon, the pseudo-military plans for a coup. These segments were booed at this year's Cannes festival; the European left still thinks such American radicals are ideologues, not—as Schrader presents them—a Manson-like gang with slogans.

In the last half-hour he also allows Miss Richardson to shine a bit—a symbol, as F. Lee Bailey put it, of "a whole generation kidnapped." In a good, post-arrest interview with Bailey (played by Gerald Gordon), Richardson says, "I'd like to tell the truth." Then she shrugs, "But I don't know what it is." As noted, the film could not have been made without Ms. Hearst's help; parts are probably self-serving. But the conclusion also rings true as a general statement about a confused and still confusing period in which moral right and wrong were set off balance; a consensual evaluation of that period may never be possible. As flawed as it is, *Patty* has the strength of quiet honesty.

TOM O'BRIEN

Regina deCormier-Shekerjian

**Kinship**

On this day in November
that mask, that pink skull
that bares its white teeth
in a grin from the center
of the green and red rays of the sun,
proclaims kinship, and ceremony.

On this day in November,
in the cemetery, with machetes
we hack down the year's growth of weeds.
Throw out the dead wreaths,
sweep away the leaves covered with dust,
bring flowers, and food, guitars
brimmed with songs, *alabanzas*,
for the ones Death stole, too often
on the day we were forgetful—
the day the sun caroled its gold
in a sky like a benevolent bishop,
or the day the rain came
with its green promise of corn,
or the day we bought a new pair of shoes,
the day we sang in the shower
and embraced the sweet aromas of laundry
and tomatoes—
the day we forgot the name of Death
is the name that bleats
in the mouth of Life.

Today, on the Day of the Dead,
on this day in November,
we remember, and we dance
the two-step dance of the kinned.
In the netted light
endless variations of memory,
the clockwork of approaching history.
In the marrowbone the knowledge

that tomorrow
this food we leave for the dead
will fatten the possums.
These flowers we place on the graves
of the *angelitos*, the little ones,
will give themselves to the bees.
And we will rise and go to our jobs
in the ordinary light
of an ordinary day, in our pockets
keys, lists, eyeglasses,
the loose change of Fate.



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# Once the introductions are over

JOHN ELIAS

When the book editor of *Commonweal* asked me to review some books on the Catholic faith and adult catechisms that have been published in the past decade, I assented without knowing the enormity of the task before me. There came to my house three large cartons containing almost two dozen books. It has been quite an experience poring through these books and deciding what needs to be said in brief about each of them.

I write this review mainly for practitioners in the field of adult religious education: pastors, religious educators, adult educators, and catechists. The first group of books is of benefit mainly for continuing professional development as well as for reference. These are theology books as such, written by professional theologians with a view to a theologically literate audience.

A second group comprises those books which are designed for use in educating adults in the faith, either for initiating them into the Catholic faith or in renewing their knowledge of Catholic teachings. The latter books have the widest possible audience in mind and are specifically designed to be used for personal or group study and thus usually include such educational tools as discussion or reflection questions. I am happy to report that there were many excellent books contained in those cartons. (The prices given are for paperback editions.)

**Theology** The major book in this area for the professional is of course Richard McBrien's *Catholicism* (Harper & Row, 1981, $24.95, 1289 pp.), which is available in a single volume study edition. Readers of this journal are no doubt familiar with the broad scope and thorough treatment which McBrien gives to many aspects of Catholic theology. The study edition includes many thoughtful questions and an extremely helpful glossary of terms. The book also gives many helpful directions for those who wish to pursue particular topics at greater depth.

In *An Introduction to Christian Faith* (Paulist, 1980, $4.95, 210 pp.), Walter Kasper presents in book form a series of lectures he gave to priests and teachers of religion and catechetics. The central theological focus is faith in its relationship to modern intellectual and cultural movements. Though the European context of the book makes it less appealing to North American audiences, the rich biblical and philosophical sources are helpful for understanding the central concept of faith. The book is not comprehensive, being an introduction to systematic theology from a philosophical and biblical perspective. There is no treatment of the moral, spiritual, and liturgical life of the Catholic community.

Thomas Rausch in *The Roots of the Catholic Tradition* (Glazier, 1986, $16.95, 247 pp.), focuses on the concept of tradition. Using biblical and historical sources he tells the story of the emergence of the Catholic tradition from its biblical foundations. The book treats the main elements of the Catholic tradition and shows how this tradition is open to new developments. The emphasis is on theological and sacramental dimensions of the tradition, with less attention on moral and spiritual aspects.

A decidedly historical approach is found in Thomas Bokenkotter's *Essential Catholicism: Dynamics of Faith and Belief* (Doubleday, 1986, $9.95, 438 pp.). Nearly every theological issue is raised in succinct form in this helpful compendium. While the author is careful to present the "official teaching of the church," he does not shy away from presenting the opinions of theological dissenters. The author prefers to write about what theologians are saying rather than to offer his own interpretations. The book is well written and offers many suggestions for pursuing issues further.

The best small book on the Catholic faith, in my opinion, is Monika Hellwig's *Understanding Catholicism* (Paulist, 1981, $4.95, 200 pp.). This work is comprehensive, well written, and accessible. The book is a mini-treatment of systematic theology, utilizing some of the best work in both Scripture studies and theology. The books by Bokenkotter and Hellwig might also be used with adults who have some theological background.

**Catechetics** The most basic book in this category is Frank DeSiano's *Presenting the Catholic Faith: A Modern Catechism for Inquirers* (Paulist, 1986, $3.95, 153 pp.). This is a simple and clear explanation of the chief aspects of Catholic life and belief for those who are seekers or inquirers. It is suited for the first stage of the initiation process (the inquiry stage) into the Catholic church. The text combines short explanatory sections, questions and answers, scriptural quotations (unfortunately removed from the main text and placed in separate blocks), and additional information. DeSiano has succeeded in producing a book that is accessible to all and should lead many to desire a more in-depth study of the Catholic faith.

James Hanson's *If I'm a Christian, Why Be a Catholic? The Biblical Roots of Catholic Faith* (Paulist, 1984, $5.95,

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232 pp.) has serious weaknesses that make its use problematic. The book, in an artificial manner, attempts to connect Catholic teachings with biblical roots, usually incidents in the Jewish Scriptures. This results in many forced interpretations of these passages. The question-and-answer format is generally not used effectively. The author shows an adequate knowledge of modern theological studies but little awareness of the best methods to present theology in a clear and effective manner.

Richard Chilson set out to write a book designed primarily for use in initiating new members into the Catholic church. Unfortunately, I cannot recommend his *Catholic Christianity: A Guide to the Way, the Truth, and the Life* (Paulist, 1987, $6.95, 472 pp.) for this purpose. Though the book might be a reference book for inquirers or for Catholics, it lacks depth, imagination, and detail. In an effort to get everything at least mentioned in the text nothing is given an adequate treatment. The basic framework of the book is excellent, but the book lacks soul and spirit.

It is also difficult to recommend an earlier book by Chilson, *An Introduction to the Faith of Catholics* (Revised Edition. Paulist 1975, $4.95, 303 pp.). There are really two books here, one in ordinary print (for non-Catholics) and one in italics (for Catholics). The non-Catholic inquirers get the better of the bargain since they are spared the author's doleful misgivings about many of the effects of the Second Vatican Council. The publisher should have taken the author's suggestion of publishing two separate books or, better, should have dropped the sections for "aiding" the transitional Catholics.

When one examines other catechetically oriented adult catechisms, one realizes why Anthony Wilhelm's *Christ Among Us: A Modern Presentation of the Catholic Faith for Adults* (Harper & Row, 1985, $6.95, 433 pp.) has sold close to two million copies in twenty years. It is clear, comprehensive, and inspiring. It respects the maturity of adults. The author clearly differentiates between the essential and the peripheral in Catholic teachings. Many aids for discussion, prayer, and future study are given. Though this book was unfortunately the subject of controversy a number of years ago, it still maintains its classic status among adult catechisms.

A lack of structure and depth characterize Matthew Kohmescher's *Catholicism Today: A Survey of Catholic Belief and Practice* (Paulist, 1980, $4.95, 209 pp.). Twenty-six topics are treated in no particular order. Many difficult questions are given superficial treatment. The most helpful parts of the book are the questions at the end of each section. I do not believe that brief surveys of belief and practices are best suited for either introducing persons to the faith or in renewing the faith of Catholics.

William Reiser has taken seriously the adage "less is more" in his beautifully written *An Unlikely Catechism: Some Challenges for the Creedless Catholic* (Paulist, 1985, $6.95, 173 pp.). In clear but theologically rich language, the author explains both theology and spirituality as these apply to Jesus, soul, and resurrection. The book is his attempt to give Catholic answers to Kant's three questions: "What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope for?" This book also skillfully probes the spiritual meaning within the doctrines of the church. Would that Reiser would continue his probes into other areas of Catholic doctrine.

Kathleen Fischer and Thomas Hart go further than Reiser in their engaging *Christian Foundations: An Introduction to Faith in Our Times* (Paulist, 1986, $9.95, 222 pp.). They cover more topics, give many helps for study and reflection, and manifest a clear ecumenical vision of Christian faith. The authors are sensitive to the issues raised by feminist theologians about our God images. They succeed admirably in relating doctrine to life and spirituality. The text is a joy to read and spiritually moving. The book deserves a wide use in the adult catechumenate and in renewal courses in the Catholic faith.

In *The Catholic Faith: An Introduction* (Paulist, 1987, $4.95, 184 pp.), Lawrence Cunningham has adapted a basic college introductory course to Catholicism into a book for anyone interested in

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**Christian Foundation,** *by Kathleen Fischer and Thomas Hart, Paulist, 1986, $9.95, 222 pp.*

**The Catholic Faith,** *by L. Cunningham, Paulist, 1987, $4.95, 184 pp.*

**Looking at Our Faith,** *edited by Thomas Ivory, Sadlier, $18, 150 pp.*

**The Church's Confession of Faith,** *by Walter Kasper, Ignatius Press, 1987, $14.95, 378 pp.*



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studying about Catholicism. His book is readable, has a clear structure, is relatively comprehensive, and includes helpful discussion questions. The special feature of Cunningham's book is its attempt to introduce persons not only to learning but also to experiencing life in the Catholic church. His suggestions for accomplishing this include reading the Bible, attending liturgies, approaching study in a spirit of leisure and wonder, and keeping a journal. He also includes a number of thought experiments.

From an educator's point of view, the most useful adult catechism is *Looking at Our Faith: A Catechetical Approach to Adults* (Sadlier, $18, 150 pp.), edited by Thomas Ivory. This is not a book but rather a series of short pamphlets (eight pages in each) written by different authors on aspects of the Catholic faith. Each pamphlet is clearly written and contains helpful suggestions for discussion and sharing. Although the primary focus of the series is to initiate members into the Catholic faith, the materials are suitable for general adult education courses. This program includes booklets for organizers, teachers, and participants.

**A national catechism** Among religious educators today there is discussion of the advisability of a national catechism. A number of bishops are on record favoring such a project. Those interested in such a prospect might look at *The Church's Confession of Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Ignatius Press, 1987, $14.95, 378 pp.). This work was written largely by Walter Kasper under the aegis of the German bishops' conference. The book does not include the moral teachings of the church since the bishops decided to treat this in Part II of the catechism. This catechism, an extended treatise on the articles of the Nicene Creed, is rich in biblical, patristic, and conciliar references. It does not shy away from controversial issues (which are treated in smaller print). While I do not believe that this book deserves or will get widespread use among North American pastors and adult educators (it is manifestly written for German Catholics), the book's concise presentation of church teaching and contemporary theology should be a challenge to American bishops, theologians, and religious educators who are interested in developing a national catechism for adults. While I am not sure what such a collaborative effort might produce, the process would be lively, especially if the recent consultative style of writing church documents in this country were followed. □

# BOOKS

# Squaring off across the Pacific

**TRADING PLACES**
How We Allowed Japan to Take the Lead
**Clyde V. Prestowitz, Jr.**
Basic, $19.95, 384 pp.

**THE CUOMO COMMISSION REPORT**
A New American Formula for a Strong Economy
**The Cuomo Commission on Trade and Competitiveness**
Simon and Schuster, $19.95, $9.95 paper, 259 pp.

**Kenneth P. Jameson**

*Trading Places* may well be the most damning of the kiss-and-tell books about the Reagan administration. The author has lived and worked in Japan and was intimately involved in the U.S. Commerce Department's efforts to negotiate better access to the Japanese economy. He documents how the free-trade and free-market ideology of the U.S. was continually outnegotiated and out-competed by the nationalistic combination of Japanese business and government. As a result many U.S. industries have been "hollowed-out," their domestic operations reduced to distribution of items produced mainly by Japanese firms. And as Japanese firms begin producing in the U.S., they bring their own parts suppliers, financial sources, and even construction firms, which ensures that there are few linkages with the U.S. economy.

The *Cuomo Commission Report*, a blue-ribbon committee (chaired by Lewis B. Kaden) of top CEOs, labor leaders, and academics assembled by New York's Governor Cuomo to make policy recommendations regarding the nation's trade problems, is an interesting complement to *Trading Places*. The members, including Prestowitz, see the loss in U.S. competitiveness as the dominant reality of today's economy. Most of the report attempts to explain the genesis of the situation and then suggests a set of steps which should be taken to confront the problems.

The *Report* has been well received in the Dukakis camp and represents a thought-provoking response to the legacy of the Reagan administration. It deals seriously with problems of the federal deficit, the balance of payments deficit, and developing country debt, a welcome change from our current politics of evasion. Yet its failure to move beyond the economic, where growth is the highest value, leaves this reader less than fully satisfied.

In one area the books have little apparent overlap. The Cuomo Commission treats the international economic order at some length. They give it context in a chapter on "America Rebuilds the Postwar World," and then have specific proposals in "Toward a New International Order." Prestowitz deals little



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with Japan's stance on international agreements, implying that they will be used for Japan's own purposes. Yet in the recent economic summit, the Japanese disturbed the managed tranquillity by proposing a new approach to the Latin American debt problem. This is one central element of the Cuomo Commission stance, and perhaps it indicates that the Japanese realize that new departures which stimulate the world economy, particularly the very depressed developing countries, should be an important element of policy concern.

Since Japan is currently the best player in the economic game, Prestowitz's knowledge of the inner workings of Japanese economic policymaking and his detailed treatment of the negotiations for greater American access to the Japanese market are important. His anecdotes about particular decision-makers and understanding of the government bureaucracy, including its internal conflicts, help explain how the long and tortuous negotiations which formally open the Japanese market to the U.S. products do not notably increase their market penetration. We negotiate on specific products, soda, ash or metal baseball bats, and then subtle Ministry resistance or internal decisions of major Japanese economic groups (*keiretsu*) limit sales increases, despite market prices quite favorable to the U.S. products.

While this appears to us as unfair play, it occurs because Japan defines its security in economic terms, and thus single-mindedly pursues economic independence and technological dominance. As an eighteenth-century Tokugawa philosopher wrote: "Foreign trade is a war in that each party seeks to extract wealth from the other." This allows the Japanese government and their private sector to collaborate, each sharing responsibility for the good of the society, an effort which foreigners can only threaten.

In contrast, the U.S. economy is transparent, open to any economic actor, and we have a Manichaean view of government and private spheres. The Cuomo Commission attempts to deal with these issues. They specifically support the stance of the 1988 trade bill of ensuring fair international trade, and they would also provide support to domestic industries to improve their competitiveness. Their five industry studies (apparel, steel, food manufacturing, telecommunications, and financial services) provide some specificity on means of improving our performance.

And throughout the book there is an effort to find areas in which government can take a positive role. The experience at the state level in improving government rather than destroying it or abusing it has provided some credibility to this stance. However, the dissent of two commission members on the increased role of government shows that the Manichaeans are still important; and the military procurement scandal, along with the many other ethical problems of the Reagan administration, indicates that in the U.S. they may be right. Making a mixed economy work appears to be the crucial economic problem of the day, and Japan has certainly solved it better than the United States.

This points to another complementarity between the books, their treatment of the nature of the societies they deal with. In addition to its nationalistic policy, Japanese success is based upon a very cohesive society which is clear about its own traditions and its future direction, and which places a high value on institutional harmony. Individuals strongly identify with their institutions, be they government ministries or business groups, and give them their best. Government and business strive to ensure institutional stability and to lower risk through long-run perspectives, "visions," and planning. Harmony puts limits on ostentatious consumption and places a higher value on saving; and production, an indicator of economic strength, takes precedence over consumption.

The contrast with our own society is clear. We are individualistic, using institutions for our own purposes; Lee Iacocca's multimillion dollar income and Donald Trump's yacht are objects of admiration, not of embarrassment; our corporations are ever more threatened if they look for anything but short-term profit, for they are simply "money


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machines rather than organisms (like Japanese firms)." And the economy must provide ever more consumption, even if it requires fiscal and balance of trade deficits of over $150 billion per year.

The Cuomo Commission suggests worker management and better labor-management relations, better education, more participation and cooperation, and a state-federal partnership. And they call on such values as the democratic process, diversity and participation, compassion, the middle class, and foremost, growth. This is where I find the *Report* weakest, for two reasons.

First, values should not be an addendum, but should be central. Any successful program will require a challenge to American values; this is the challenge of political leadership today.

Secondly, we must realize that dealing with the economic problems will require political conflict, for there are those who have gained greatly from the very problems cited in the *Report*. Wall Street certainly perceives no problems, based on the fortunes that have been amassed in this period of unregulated free market disequilibrium; nor do the many Reagan officials who have benefited personally. Or in the case of dealings with the Japanese, a bevy of advisors and lobbyists earn a good living by supporting Japanese positions; real estate brokers are selling their most expensive properties in Japan; one departing Reagan appointee who had negotiated, softly, for access to the Japanese auto parts market resigned under a cloud after soliciting business from Japanese firms.

So the fundamental issue is not just competition with the Japanese or with other countries, but it is the kind of society we will become, and it has fundamentally to do with the absence of harmony as a goal, the individualism which finds few limits. □

## A STORY ONLY PARTIALLY TOLD

**ADAM, EVE, AND THE SERPENT**
**Elaine Pagels**
Random House, $17.95, 189 pp.

**Michael J. Himes**

Elaine Pagels writes in her introduction that her book "explores, among other things, how . . . Christian interpretations of Genesis emerged in the first four centuries, and how Christians invoked the story of Adam and Eve to justify and establish their beliefs; how they saw their own situations, their sufferings, and their hopes mirrored in the story of the creation and the fall." The problem with the book lies in her phrase "among other things." There are too many "other things," and in a volume of less than one-hundred-and-sixty pages of large-printed text the treatment is necessarily thin.

No less than four major themes are taken up: the development of Christian exegesis of Genesis 1-3; the origins and growth of a Christian sexual ethic related to but distinct from both Jewish and classical pagan attitudes; the shift in the attitude of Christians to the Roman state from the period of persecution to the post-Constantinian era; and the claim that Augustine's theory of original sin marked a decisive change, indeed, a reversal of the theological anthropology of the first four centuries. Professor Pagels attempts to relate these themes to one another, I think unsuccessfully. She has interesting comments to make on all of them, but in a book which is both brief and diffuse, no one theme is adequately treated.

The title of the book and the inclusion of the text of the first three chapters of Genesis, presumably for easy reference, would lead the reader to expect a careful examination and comparison of early Christian exegeses of the Creation and Fall stories. It is surprising, therefore, that Pagels never makes a single reference to the major commentaries on Genesis produced by Christian authors in the first four centuries. I cannot fathom how one can claim to examine Christian reading of Genesis 1-3 without mentioning the commentaries of Origen, Basil, Ambrose, or Jerome. Even in the case of Augustine, who plays an important role in her book, Pagels relies principally on the anti-Pelagian works and never once cites any of his four principal commentaries on the opening chapters of Genesis. As a study of early Christian interpretation of the Creation and Fall stories this leaves a great deal wanting.

In looking at the change in Christian attitudes toward the Roman state, Professor Pagels gives insufficient attention to the important shift which occurred when the eschatological expectations of the earliest generations of Christians went unfulfilled and the recognition set in that the community was here for the long haul. Sexual practices may have remained the same but their meaning was transformed. Further, an important factor affecting some Christians' attitudes toward marriage and family that appears in various guises in patristic sources goes unmentioned: the classical ideal of *otium*, leisure, a necessary constituent of the truly happy life of contemplation and study. Frequently, Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries advanced this ideal as a motive for sexual restraint in general and celibacy in particular. Pagels stresses such practice as instances of Christian opposition to the values of Greco-Roman society. The untroubled life devoted to intellectual and literary pursuits was, however, a value shared by Christians and pagans in antiquity, and sexual abstinence was seen as an important step in realizing that value. For example, it was to such a life that Augustine intended to devote himself after his baptism and for the sake of which he believed continence necessary.

There are a number of troubling anachronisms in the discussion of Christian political attitudes. I am not at all sure that the concept of "state" can be applied to the Roman empire, and I am



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certain that Clement of Alexandria does not fit comfortably under the description "egalitarian." Misapplication of such categories confuses the reading of classical authors. Thus, even after noting that Robert Grant has cited Justin as an example of "Christian devotion to the monarchy," Pagels cites Justin's denunciation of the gods as demons as an instance of Christian hostility to Rome. But for Justin, as for classical authors generally, Rome was not a "state" in the modern sense; Rome was the embodiment of what we mean by a culture. And to that culture of which he was a product, Justin was very warmly complimentary, even to the point of placing its cultural heroes, the philosophers, beside the Hebrew prophets as those who had lived in accord with the Logos before the coming of Christ.

Theological classics go in and out of fashion, and currently (Cardinal Ratzinger is an exception) Augustine is very "out." Augustine-bashing is popular among many, especially with writers on spirituality and historians of sexual attitudes. Augustine's influence has been vast, and some effects of that influence have been unhappy. But Augustine did not completely recast the Christian tradition. Important elements of his theological anthropology are found in earlier Christian writers, pre-eminently Ambrose.

Pagels notes that one cannot seek "true" Christianity by searching out its earliest forms, and that consequently it would be simplistic to depict Chrysostom (whom she contrasts with Augustine) and the Pelagians as the "real" Christians and Augustine as the distorter of the tradition. Rather, her question is, "Since the representatives of Christian orthodoxy, from Justin through Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement, and Origen, had denounced gnostic interpretations of Genesis in the name of moral freedom, how could the majority of Christians in the fifth century be persuaded to give up this primary theme of Christian doctrine—or, at least, to modify it radically—following Augustine's reinterpretation of Adam's sin?"

Pagels is too astute to answer this question with a single cause. But she develops only one response in any detail: Augustine's treatment of human freedom and original sin coincided with the changed political situation of the Christian church, which found itself after Constantine no longer a persecuted movement but a privileged institution. Undoubtedly there are political resonances to theological positions which are unintended by those who hold them, and so Augustine's insistence on the radical insufficiency of human freedom to achieve moral goodness could have been employed to justify a paternalist government at the expense of individual liberty. But so could the Pauline epistles. Propagandists for submission to authority in the fifth century would have found far more support in Eusebius and the "imperial theologians" than in Augustine who directed much of *De civitate Dei* against those who identified the city of God with any earthly commonwealth.

In her extremely compressed summary of the complex issues at stake in the Pelagian and semi-Pelagian controversies, Pagels misses a key issue. Augustine was fascinated (perhaps appalled) by the reality of time. In the *Confessions, De civitate Dei, De Genesi ad litteram,* and sermon after sermon, he wonders at how deeply marked we are by our personal and communal pasts. By contrast, he understood the Pelagian position as discounting the weight of our temporality, for Augustine always the first characteristic of creatureliness. In the Pelagian view, as Augustine understood it, each human being starts fresh, unbound by the past, fundamentally unaffected by the communal history which produces him or her. Pelagianism was ahistorical, not unlike Gnosticism. The kind of religious temperament which would find the one attractive would be likely to sympathize with the other as well.

Pagels writes clearly and crisply. But the lack of focus and the attempt to cover too many, too important, and too complex issues in too brief a space undercut the book's value. The dust jacket predicts that this book "will prove a landmark of historical thought and profoundly affect all future interpretations of the meaning of Christianity." I doubt it. □


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# THE ESSENTIAL RATZINGER

**CHURCH, ECUMENISM, AND POLITICS**
New Essays in Ecclesiology
**Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger**
Crossroad, $19.95, 278 pp.

**Joseph A. Komonchak**

This volume collects fourteen essays, all but one published between 1972 and 1986. They are divided according to the topics in the title. Three essays discuss aspects of the church's nature and structure. The first is a useful summary of the ecclesiology of Vatican II, which includes a good explanation of Ratzinger's long-standing reservations about the adequacy of the notion of the church as "People of God." These are more persuasively argued than the hasty set of assertions about "modern variations of the concept of the People of God," which he has appended. The second and third essays are devoted to an argument about the role of the papal primacy and about the structure and tasks of the Synod of Bishops and help one understand the cardinal's position on several matters of contemporary ecclesial interest, not least of all the role of episcopal conferences.

The next section includes three essays on ecumenical problems. The most important of these are the first two, devoted to the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue and to the present state of the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue. Both of these aroused a great deal of comment when first published, and Ratzinger here explains and defends himself, both in postscripts and in footnotes.

The other eight essays are devoted to the church and politics. After a brief sermon, which does not contain anything not found in the other pieces, he discusses a series of questions: the relationship between theology and politics; the nature of conscience; freedom and constraint; Christianity in a pluralistic democracy; Europe and Christianity; eschatology and utopia; and the anthropology of the recent Vatican declarations on liberation theology. The mere listing of such topics is enough to indicate the relevance of the essays to contemporary discussions in this country. That they are addressed from the perspective of a different political experience is at once an advantage and a disadvantage.

These essays are extremely illuminating for anyone who wishes to know the basic theological and socio-political stance from which Ratzinger approaches the issues. At the risk of oversimplification, I will summarize it in the following statements: Christianity destroyed the fusion of the sacred and the political that marked the ancient world and which threatens to return in various forms of political theology today. An essential role of the church today is the defense of conscience against various totalitarian threats. This requires a clarification of the true nature of freedom, which is neither mere indeterminancy nor arbitrariness, but a positive devotion to the truth and to genuine values. It is not to be defined in opposition to constraint, but in fact only exists within a network of obligatory commitments.

Freedom cannot be guaranteed by the structural forms of democracy, which in fact presuppose free moral commitments, and it is threatened by those ideologies and movements which believe either that they know in advance how the logic of history inevitably moves on towards freedom or believe it possible to create structures which will relieve individuals of the burden of individual freedom. For this reason, Christianity must play an indispensable role in preserving genuine freedom by defending the fundamental moral values on which it alone can rest. It cannot do this by a return to the theocratic system it sometimes mistakenly set up in the past, but neither can


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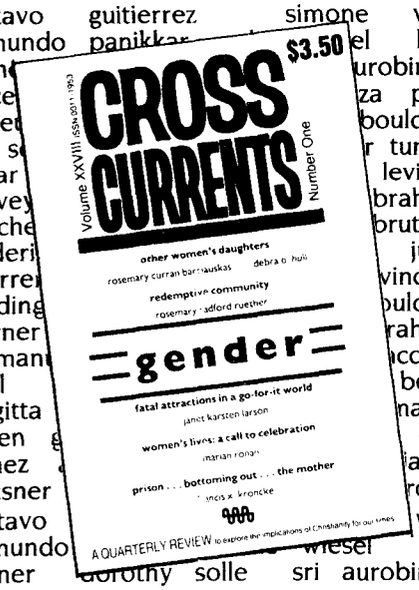


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it be content with the purely private role which liberalism wishes for it. The political belongs to the realm of reason and ethics, set free by faith, and not to theology; to speak of a political theology is to run the danger of works-righteousness. Finally, the church should be principally concerned with education towards genuine freedom and fundamental values and not to the reform of structures.

In all these essays, many of the typical strengths and weaknesses of Ratzinger's theological vision and method are visible. There is a powerful sense of the truth and integrity of the Christian vision of things as a distinct interpretation of the world and of history, which Catholics should proclaim and defend with far more confidence than they commonly show. Almost every essay attempts to build upon biblical teachings, and most of them look to earlier ages of church history for illustrations or confirmation. On the other hand, a deep suspicion of the whole modern project, described as the effort to substitute human doing for receptivity of God's deeds, often gives the essays a querulous and defensive tone. The distinctively Christian is sometimes promoted by means of caricatures of differing or opposed positions, most notably when the issue between the Vatican and liberation theologies is posed as the choice between genuine freedom and anarchy. Far more space is devoted to the aberrations of the left than to those of the right.

The translation is generally trustworthy, but hardly elegant, and the effort to avoid allegedly exclusive language is particularly inept. The essay on the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue, which had a different translator, contains several mistakes, including inexplicable replacements of the word "ancient" by "medieval." In my copy, on pp. 216-17, about fifteen important lines of the original German text have mysteriously disappeared. □


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# CREATING A WHOLE-EARTH THEOLOGY

**THOMAS BERRY AND THE NEW COSMOLOGY**
**Edited by Anne Lonergan and Caroline Richards**
Twenty-Third Publications, $7.95, 112 pp.

**Lawrence S. Cunningham**

Thomas Berry is one of those thinkers in American Catholicism who has worked and written at the margin of the academic and ecclesiastical worlds. He rarely shows up at conferences, symposia, and other such intellectual tribal rites. He publishes in journals infrequently, preferring to issue papers from his center in Riverdale, New York. Ordained a Passionist priest in the early 1940s, he studied Chinese in Peking in the early fifties; gained a doctorate in history; held various academic posts including a professorship at Fordham University. Today he spends the better part of his time thinking, reading, and writing as a freelance intellectual.

Widely read in the religious traditions of the world, Berry has been busy attempting to construct a planetary theology which would do justice to the broadest insights of contemporary science (e.g., the "anthropic principle" in cosmology, or James Lovelock's "Gaia hypothesis") and the sapiential traditions of the world's religions. It should not surprise us to learn that he is deeply interested in, and an expositor of, the thinking of the late Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

This slim volume contains three pieces from Berry and a number of responses, some of them critical, to his work. Donald Senior points out that a view of the Bible espoused by Berry (following, among others, Lynn White, Jr.) is very one-sided with its reading of the transcendent Yahweh as desacralizing the universe. Gregory Baum is surely right in noting the hopeless romanticism involved in the rejection of all existing political stratagems in favor of the political agenda of the "Greens." James Farris (the only non-Roman Catholic contributing to this volume) argues against a too ready dismissal of the category of redemption in favor of a creation theology.

Like some of the contributors, I am less sanguine than Berry about our being on the edge of a paradigm shift in which we are slowly moving to a new era of ecological consciousness. I also resist some of the more apocalyptic pronunciamentos like those of the Club of Rome reports (cited with approval by Berry). Nonetheless, Berry should not be dismissed as a counter-cultural crank. He carries on the project of Teilhard and others by attempting to think theologically on the macro level. When so much theology is parochial in its orientation and bloodless in its relation to the world, this is



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both a hope-filled and encouraging sign.

There is one significant and critically important way in which Berry differs from Teilhard. Berry can set out his ideas without the fear of censorship and have them criticized by his peers. It is in that process of criticism that the gold separates from the dross. This slim volume is a first formal step in providing a critique for Berry whose provocative ideas are, at the very least, worthy of serious consideration. □

## REVIEWERS

KENNETH JAMESON *is a professor of economics and a Fellow of the Helen Kellogg Institute of International Studies at Notre Dame.*

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## CORRESPONDENCE

*(Continued from page 546)*

greater) and, even more, because of the diabolical efficiency of planning and operation, but, even granting this, it does not stand alone in the history of human atrocities. As for Waldheim, it does not exonerate him of guilt to say his participation was (at least to the extent firm evidence is at hand) peripheral. The strongest case against him relates to providing information leading to reprisals against Jugoslav partisans. Which raises the interesting question: Are those who plan, command, or merely participate in today's reprisals against Palestinian "partisans" tomorrow's "international diplomatic pariahs"?

GORDON C. ZAHN

### Curricular judgments

New Haven, Conn.

*To the Editors:* Eric Jorstad's essay, "What Johnny Can't Read" [June 17] betrays a blithe naiveté about the compatibility of religious belief with the mores of our increasingly secularized society. This can be seen, first, in his failure to pay sufficient attention to the general approach of the Court in *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, and its implications for the subject of his essay, *Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools*.

Writing for the *Yoder* majority, Chief Justice Berger emphasized the importance of education in forming not only the capacity of a child to reason, but the very perspective from which later reasoning will take place. Thus the Court held that the Amish children must be released from their obligation to attend high school until age sixteen, in part because it recognized that what they would be taught was not "objective," "neutral" information which they could use however they wished. Rather, it was a way of viewing the world which could alienate them from the religious tradition of their parents.

The fundamentalists in *Mozert* do not hold the radical objections to the whole of modern living voiced by the Amish. Nevertheless, they cannot, for example, construe religion as a matter of taste, or religious tolerance as indifference in the face of equally good alternatives. Yet these are precisely the sentiments which they allege will be inculcated by the readers in question. In this respect, *Yoder* and *Mozert* differ only in degree, not in kind.

In contrast to Justice Berger, Jorstad tends to depict religious belief as a matter about which one's head can reason, influencing the sentiments, habits, and attitudes of one's heart. He claims, for example, that "the students [in *Mozert*] were only being informed about a variety of ideas, not compelled to act them out or believe in them." Is the education of the young merely a matter of presenting them with *ideas*, or does it not involve the inculcation of a certain perspective? In implicitly avowing the former option, Jorstad is not merely at odds with the *Yoder* court, but also with such cultural critics as Alisdair MacIntyre and Robert Bellah. He is also implicitly self-contradictory: surely the tolerance of divergent worldviews which he believes public schools must teach is fostered by both subtle and explicit means, by character formation as well as intellectual training.

Secondly, Jorstad's identification of the three options open to those with religious objections to public school curricula ignores present political realities. He notes that parents could (1) send their children to private schools; (2) educate their children at home; or (3) use the democratic political processes to alter the school board's decision.

In the abstract, these are all tenable options. Yet what about the hard fact that private schools are often extremely costly? How many people have the time or training to educate their children at home?

Jorstad's final alternative raises other worries. Democratic processes are effective for those who have a numerical majority or political power. But when groups such as the fundamentalists become marginalized, their capacity to educate their children in religion increasingly depends upon the will of an unsympathetic populace. Yet the point of our constitutional protections is precisely to insulate certain basic rights, including religious freedom, from "the tyranny of the majority."

The state does require broad authority to set a uniform curriculum for its public schools. But the judiciary is ill-equipped to serve as a national school board. Jorstad's essay does not acknowledge the cost of these political exigencies in terms of parental religious freedom.

M. CATHLEEN KAVENY

### Rites & wrongs

Garden City, N.Y.

*To the Editors:* Professor William D. Dinges's assertion ["Lefebvre Abandons Ship," August 12] that the schism led by Archbishop Lefebvre constitutes the first official schism in the church since the formation of the Polish National Catholic Church constitutes an error of omission. During the 1930s, a major schism occurred in America in the Byzantine Rite Ruthenian Eparchy (then called Greek Rite Ruthenian Catholic Eparchy), an Eastern rite church in union with Rome. Often called the "Celibacy Schism," it also involved lay trusteeship



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and forced Latinization of this Eastern rite. The schism was permanent because it led to the formation of the Carpatho-Russian Greek Catholic Diocese which this year celebrated its golden jubilee.

A 1929 Papal decree, *Cum data fuerit*, enforced mandatory celibacy for all newly ordained North American priests of this rite as well as future émigré priests. In the fall of 1936, Father Orestes Chornock of Bridgeport, Connecticut, the leader of the anti-celibacy movement, and five other priests were excommunicated *nominatim* by Pope Pius XI. On September 18, 1938, Chornock, a widower, was consecrated bishop in the Cathedral of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople. Therefore, this church has canonical legitimacy.

All three schisms were triggered by attempts to produce uniformity rather than pluralism within the church. The Polish and Carpatho-Russian schisms were preceded by very harsh attempts by English-speaking prelates to Americanize Eastern European immigrants. This is certainly the case in the Celibacy Schism because pressure from American clergymen prompted the celibacy decree. Like Lefebvre, Chornock was judged "different because he remained the same" since Eastern rite secular priests were far more often married than celibate.

RICHARD RENOFF

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